Some Plays
published recently in
French's Acting Edition

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE.
A Farce in three acts.
By WALTER HACKETT and ROI COOPER MEGRUE.
2s. 6d.

THE BEST PEOPLE.
A Comedy in three acts.
By DAVID GRAY and AVERY HOPWOOD.
2s. 6d.

BERKELEY SQUARE.
A Play in three acts.
By JOHN L. BALDERSTON.
2s. 6d.

MARIGOLD.
An Arcadian Comedy in four acts.
By L. ALLEN HARKER and F. R. PRYOR.
2s. 6d.

MARCH HARES.
A Fantastic Satire in three acts.
By HARRY WAGSTAFF GRIBBLE.
2s. 6d.

THE WHOLE TOWN'S TALKING.
A Farce in three acts.
By ANITA LOOS and JOHN EMERSON.
2s. 6d.

The published prices are net

French's Acting Edition. No. 1181.

THE NAUGHTY WIFE

A Comedy in Three Acts

By FRED. JACKSON

Elaborated and Revised by
EDGAR SELWYN

WILL ANDRADE
Only Addresses—
52 SWANSTON ST., MELB.
and 173 PITT ST., SYDNEY

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
Publishers
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND, W.C.2

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.
Publishers
25 WEST 45th STREET

812.5
J12

THE NAUGHTY WIFE

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY

FRED JACKSON

ELABORATED AND REVISED BY EDGAR SELWYN

COPYRIGHT, 1925, BY EDGAR SELWYN

All rights reserved

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
PUBLISHERS
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND, W.C.2

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
25 WEST 45TH STREET

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

153353

The fee for the representation of this play by amateurs is Five Guineas, payable in advance to—

Messrs. Samuel French, Ltd.,
26 Southampton Street,
Strand, London, W.C.2,

or their authorized agents, who, upon payment of the fee, will issue a licence for the performance to take place.

No performance may be given unless this licence has first been obtained.

In the event of further performances being given, the fee for each and every representation subsequent to the first is Four Guineas. This reduction applies only in the case of the performances being consecutive and at the same theatre or hall.

Character costumes and wigs used in the performance of plays contained in French's Acting Edition may be obtained from MESSRS. CHARLES H. FOX, Ltd., Acre House, 72 Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

Made and Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

THE NAUGHTY WIFE

Produced on April 11, 1918, at the Playhouse, London, with the following cast of characters :—

ELOISE FARRINGTON	*Miss Gladys Cooper*
CARTER (a Man-servant)	*Mr. H. R. Hignett*
HILARY FARRINGTON	*Mr. Charles Hawtrey*
DARRELL MCKNIGHT	*Mr. Stanley Logan*
ANNETTE (a Maid)	*Miss Mona Harrison*
NORA GAIL (a Widow)	*Miss Ellis Jeffreys*
THOMPSON (a Chauffeur)	*Mr. Ernest Graham*
BISHOP KENNELLY	*Mr. Herbert Bunston*

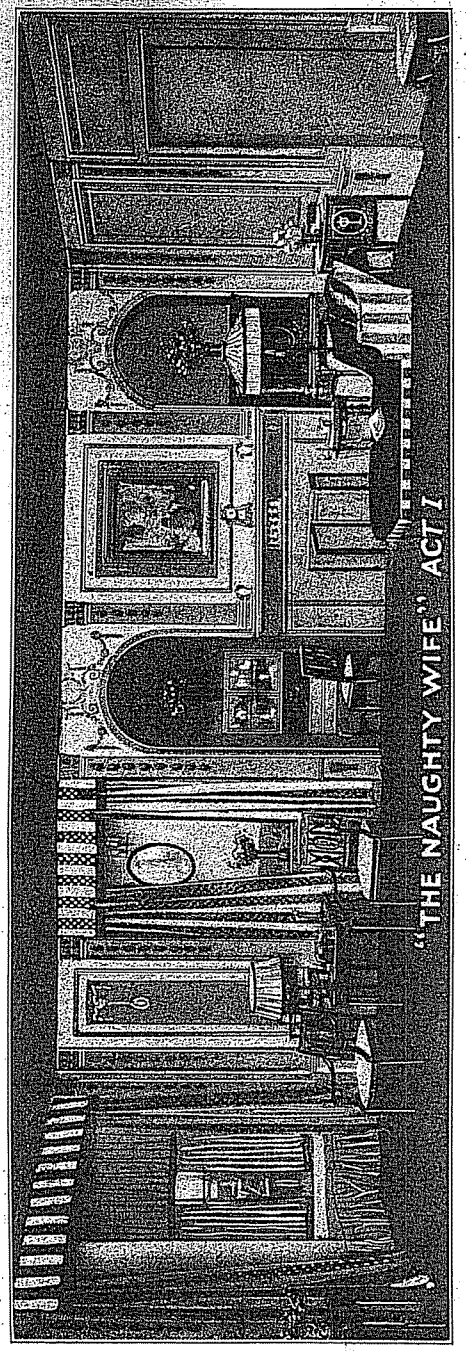
Produced by CHARLES HAWTREY

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I.—*Living-room in the Farrington's Apartment in the East Sixties, New York.*

ACT II.—*The Farrington Bungalow, Long Island. The same night.*

ACT III.—*The same as Act II. The next morning.*



"THE NAUGHTY WIFE" ACT I

To face page 5]

THE NAUGHTY WIFE

ACT I

SCENE.—*The Living-room in the Farrington's Apartment in the East Sixties, New York.*

The room is well furnished and in excellent taste. A large recessed window, with cushioned window-seat completely fills the R. *of the stage, and overlooks the street. The windows are hung with gold-coloured curtains of the sash variety and are drawn aside on rods, giving a view of the buildings across the way. Hangings dress the arch forming the window opening. Along the rear of the room from* R. *to* L. *there is a plain wing, an arch up* R.C. *opening into a hall-way which leads to the exterior door. A fireplace and mantel up* C. *with an oval niche set into the wall at each side of the fireplace. At* L.1. *there is a door leading into a bedroom and above this door a plain wing joins the back flat. The arch up* R.C *is dressed with hangings like those at the window* R. *The furniture is arranged as follows: Below the door* L.1. *is a low upholstered seat; above the door, set against the wall is a console table on which are a vase of flowers and several books. In the niche* L. *of the fireplace is a large cabinet on which is a large dark-green vase filled with flowers. In the niche* R. *of the fireplace is a combination writing-desk and cabinet with glass doors. In the cabinet section of the desk are several odd-shaped bits of bric-à-brac and on the top of the desk is a large black vase filled with flowers. On the mantelpiece is a clock and two china vases set at either end. Brass fire-irons, brass andirons and a brass fire-screen are set at the fireplace. Out in the hall-way up* R.C. *is a hall table. Over which hangs a picture framed in black and hung with heavy blue silk cords. On the hall table is a vase with autumn leaves.* R. *of the arch up* R.C. *is a console table set against the wall on which are a framed photograph, a vase of flowers and several books. Down* R. *below the window is a small round table with a vase of flowers. Over* L. *set a few feet out from the* L.1 *door there is a couch or chaise lounge with the head toward the door. Above the head of the lounge is a lamp with a silk shade and near it a round table or stand on which are several books and a matchstand with matches. Over* R. *is a writing-table with an arm-chair to the* L. *of it. Set near the up*

R. *corner of the table is a lamp with a silk shade. An arm-chair faces the down* R. *corner of the room, its back toward the floor lamp. On the writing-table are a desk blotter-pad, pen-rack with pens and ink-well, stationery rack with stationery and telegram blanks, a stamp box, desk telephone, New York telephone book, a silver cigarette box with cigarettes and a matchstand with matches. A telephone-bell box is fastened to the underside of this table and rings from off stage* R. *A dark painting, done in oil, hangs over the mantelpiece. A side chair faces the desk up* R. *of the fireplace.*

TIME.—*An autumn evening.*

LIGHTS.—*The room is illuminated by the two floor lamps and an ornamental hall lamp which hangs outside the arch up* R.C.

AT RISE.—ELOISE, *a very pretty young woman attired in an effective dinner gown, is reclining on the chaise lounge* L. *immersed in a magazine.*

CARTER, *the man-servant, enters from the bedroom* L.1 *carrying a large tan leather suit-case and crosses below the lounge toward the hall-way up* R.C. *Just as he reaches the opening to the hall the telephone on the table* R. *rings and he turns as though to answer it, but* ELOISE *prevents him.*

ELOISE (*rising and dropping her magazine*). All right, Carter, I'll answer it. (*She crosses to the 'phone on the writing-table* R.)

CARTER. Yes, ma'am. (*He turns and exits into the hall.*)

ELOISE (*takes up the 'phone and sits* L. *of the table*). Hello! Oh —— (*With suppressed excitement.*) No, he hasn't gone yet. I told you I'd 'phone you. Yes, in a few minutes. He's almost ready now.

(*She glances toward the door* L.1 *as her husband* HILARY FARRINGTON *enters from the room, carrying a manuscript case partly filled with manuscripts. He crosses above the lounge to the desk up* R. *of the fireplace.* ELOISE *hastily alters her tone and leans back in the chair pretending boredom and indifference as she continues the telephone conversation.*)

But, my dear Emily, I can't possibly come to-night, Hilary is leaving for the Long Island bungalow at Lawrence and I must stay with him until he goes. Yes, if I change my mind I'll ring you up later.

(*She hangs up the receiver and turns to* HILARY, *who, while taking a number of manuscripts from the drawer of the desk up* R.C. *and glancing over them, has shown a mild interest in her conversation.*)

HILARY (*at the desk up* R.C.). Who's that? Emily French?

ELOISE (*rising and crossing front of the table to* R.). Yes—another card party on for to-night.

HILARY (*busy with the manuscripts*). Why don't you go?

ELOISE (*over* R.). They always bore me.

HILARY. Better than being lonely.

ELOISE (*reflectively*). Oh, I shan't be lonely.

HILARY (*coming down to above the table* R. *with a quantity of manuscripts and the manuscript case*). That's not very flattering to me, is it?

ELOISE. Well, I *don't* see very much of you, do I? (*She moves front to* L.C. *front of lounge.*) And as for wasting any of your conversation on me——

HILARY (*opening the manuscript case*). My dear, I can't neglect my work. Besides, what is there to talk about?

ELOISE (L.C., *sarcastically*). Exactly. What have we to talk about? Nothing! We understand each other *perfectly*. (*Sits on lounge* L.)

HILARY (*slightly surprised at her tone*). Have *I said* anything I shouldn't?

ELOISE. No, you haven't *said* anything.

HILARY. What's wrong, then?

ELOISE. Well, you might have asked me to go with you.

HILARY (*placing some of the loose manuscripts with the others already in the case*). I've asked you several times and you've always refused.

ELOISE. Because you make me feel that I'd be in your way—that I would interfere with your work.

HILARY (*looking up from glancing over a manuscript*). My dear child, the only reason I go down there is to be *alone* with my work. But, if you *want* to come——

ELOISE. No, thank you. You'd spend all your time hunched up over a writing-desk, and I wouldn't know what to do with myself.

HILARY. Well, I can't promise to entertain you all the time, but the country is rather nice at this time of the year——

(CARTER *enters up* R.C. *and goes above the lounge toward the door* L.1.)

and we might ride occasionally.

ELOISE. That would be *too* exciting.

HILARY (*to* CARTER, *who is over* L. *by the door*). Sure you have packed everything, Carter?

CARTER. Yes, sir.

HILARY (*moving to* C. *from above the table*). Plenty of pipes and tobacco?

ELOISE (*turning to* CARTER *in mock solicitation*). Don't forget his raincoat and goloshes.

CARTER. No, ma'am.

HILARY. You'd better pack my riding things. Mrs. Farrington *may* change her mind about coming.

ELOISE. No, I won't change my mind, *now.*

(CARTER *nods and goes into the room* L.1.)

HILARY (*indifferently*). Just as you like, my dear.

(*He goes back to above table and continues to arrange his manuscripts.*)

Eloise (*as she rises*). Hilary!

(*She crosses to* Hilary.)

Hilary. Yes, dear——?

Eloise (*as she crosses*). Why can't you give up writing books?

Hilary. Give up writing?

Eloise (*tilting the chair* L. *of the table forward and leaning on the back of it*). Surely we have money enough.

Hilary (*looking over a manuscript*). Not at the rate *we* live, but even if we had enough I couldn't give it up. One doesn't work for money alone.

Eloise. For what, then?

Hilary. To justify one's reason for existence. I write books because that is the way I express myself. If I stopped working I might as well stop living. I should be of no use to anyone—not even to myself. I should simply be using up good space.

Eloise. You could—at least, *enjoy* life.

Hilary. Not without work. No one can.

Eloise (*she lets the chair down with a bang and moves down to* L.C.). That's nonsense.

Hilary. Take yourself. The only reason for your dissatisfaction at this moment—is that you have nothing to do.

Eloise. I've never been taught to do anything.

Hilary. There are a hundred and one things you might learn to do.

Eloise. Yes—I might learn to knit things, but that's not *doing* things.

Hilary (*he crosses to* Eloise). Some day, my dear, when you show yourself eager for it, I'm going to teach you how to *really* live. (*He puts his arm about her.*) How to think and see things clearly. (*Releases her.*) Just at present you're too much of a baby to amuse yourself with anything but a few coloured baubles.

Eloise. Indeed? Sometimes I wonder why you ever married me?

Hilary. Because I fell in love with you, of course.

Eloise. How could you have fallen in love with me—(*she sits on the lounge*)—if I'm as stupid as you think I am.

Hilary (*he moves to above the lounge and leans over her*). Why, my dear, I don't think you stupid. (*He slips his hand under her chin, giving her an affectionate little squeeze.*) You're charming. (*He goes quickly back to his work as he speaks.*) How could I help falling in love with you?

Eloise (*childishly*). Then why can't you like the things I like?

Hilary (*whimsically*). *You* don't like the things *I* like.

(*He turns up to the desk up* R.C. *and opens the drawer as though looking for something.*)

Eloise (*sighing*). That's why I don't understand what you saw in me. Our tastes are so different.

Hilary (*coming down to near the table* R.). Tastes have nothing to do with love. "Strike flint upon steel and there is a spark. Strike flint upon wood and there is no spark." (*He steps to the table and busies himself with a manuscript.*) Your glance was the flint upon the steel of my heart, and love was kindled. (*Bends over his work.*)

Eloise. That sounds like a quotation from one of your books.

Hilary (*quickly looking up from his work*). It is—but it's true, nevertheless. Love is a phenomenon. We don't know how it happens. It just does. (*Places some more of the manuscripts in the case.*)

Eloise. But don't you think you'd have been happier with a different sort of woman?

Hilary. A thin angular person in glasses, devoted to the classics and the feminist movement?

Eloise. No, but someone older than I am. More settled—someone more inclined to lead your life.

Hilary. Nonsense. (*He comes back to above the lounge.*) I'm perfectly happy. What if we don't think the same thoughts or have the same tastes—(*he sits beside her on the lounge, his back three-quarters to the audience, facing up stage*)—nothing unusual about that. We've only been married a year and haven't yet reached the period of readjustment. I dare say all married couples are in the same fix some time or another. Give us time. (*He puts his arms around her reassuringly.*) We'll pull through all right.

Eloise. But you're away so much—and I *do* get so lonely.

Hilary. Then pack up your things and come with me.

Eloise. To Lawrence?

Hilary. Why not? It's not half as bad as you try to make out. While I'm working you can stay out of doors and the fresh air and sunshine will do you a world of good. Come along. (*He draws her to him coaxingly.*)

Eloise. No, I don't think I shall be any happier for getting sunburn and freckles; and I'd be bored to death.

Hilary (*rising*). Oh, nonsense. (*Turning up* R.C.)

Eloise (*petulantly*). You know I would. It's a stupid place, miles away from anywhere and not a thing to do. It's as dull as ditchwater.

Hilary (*above the table* R.). I never found it so.

Eloise. That's because it takes so little to amuse you.

Hilary. That's true. When I'm alone with my work I forget everything else.

Eloise. Especially your wife.

Hilary. Oh, come now—don't let's quarrel. If you want to come, well and good, if not—— (*Finishes strapping the manuscript case.*)

ELOISE (*rising and going* C.). Why can't you do your work here?

HILARY (*taking up the manuscript case*). Too many distractions.

ELOISE. I'll keep out of your way.

HILARY. No, my dear—too much telephone and all sorts of things. I wouldn't be able to write a word.

(*He crosses* ELOISE *to* L.C. ELOISE *moves to* R. *front of the table.*)

CARTER (*enters* L.1 *carrying a black leather bag.* HILARY'S *overcoat and hat over his arm. He places the bag on the floor at the head of the lounge*). I've packed your breeches and boots, sir.

HILARY (*dropping his manuscript case among the pillows at the head of the lounge and turning to be helped with his overcoat*). Good. I don't expect to use them, but I may as well have them. (*Putting on his coat which* CARTER *holds.*) Strap the bag on the back of the car. (*Takes hat from him.*)

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He crosses above the lounge and exits up* R.C. *carrying the bag.*)

HILARY (*he goes to* ELOISE, *who is* R. *by the table*). Good-bye, dear. If you are lonely run over to Emily French's. She's sure to have something to amuse you besides cards.

ELOISE (*pleadingly*). Hilary—I don't want you to go to-night.

HILARY. I must.

ELOISE. I want you to stay—just to please me.

HILARY. Impossible. I've everything prepared and I simply *must* finish my book. Say good-bye to me and let me go. (*Attempts to kiss her.*)

ELOISE (*taking a step away from him—solemnly*). *Very well,* but I want you to always remember that I *did ask* you.

(*She crosses him to* L.C.)

HILARY. Don't be a baby!

ELOISE (*facing the door* L.1). Good-bye, Hilary.

HILARY (*steps to her*). Good-bye, dear. (*Attempts to embrace her. She avoids him, moving a little farther to* L.) Aren't you going to kiss me?

ELOISE (*her back still to him*). No.

(HILARY *pauses while he looks at her for an instant, then he turns up toward the arch up* R.C. *He turns, hesitating to leave her feeling as she does, but she makes no sign. He wheels abruptly and goes out through the hallway up* R.C. *After a short pause the front door is heard to slam. As the door slams* ELOISE *darts across the front to the window* R. *and looks out after* HILARY. *She stands for an instant in thought, then moves to the* R. *of the table* R. *and takes up the 'phone.*)

(*Standing* R. *of the table* R. *In the 'phone*). Lexington 7891, please. Yes. (*She taps on the carpet with her foot while waiting for the connection, to indicate nervousness.*) Hello! is Mr. McKnight

there? Out? Are you sure? Did he leave any message for me? Never mind—for anyone? No, thanks. No, never mind.

(*She replaces the receiver slowly and thoughtfully.*)

CARTER (*enters from the hall-way up* R.C.). Mr. McKnight, ma'am. (*He looks disapproving.*)

ELOISE (*trying to conceal her excitement*). Oh—a—show him in here, Carter.

(*She moves to* C.L.)

CARTER. Yes, ma'am.

(*He exits up* R.C.)

(ELOISE *hastily repairs her toilet. She turns quickly up toward the arch up* R.C. *patting her hair, then suddenly as though wanting to powder her nose, she runs across in front of the lounge toward the door* L.1.)

CARTER (*re-enters just as* ELOISE *gets* L. *on her way to* L.1 *door and standing at the* R. *of the opening, announces*). Mr. McKnight.

(ELOISE *stops and* DARRELL MCKNIGHT *enters. He is a handsome well-groomed man in the thirties.*)

DARRELL (*coming down* R.C. *to* C.; *speaking guardedly for* CARTER'S *benefit*). Hello, Eloise——

ELOISE (*a step toward him. Guardedly*). Hello, Darrell.

(CARTER *exits up* R.C.)

(*Making sure that* CARTER *is gone, she goes quickly to* DARRELL, *taking his hand eagerly.*) I was just 'phoning you!

DARRELL (*glancing around to see that* CARTER *is gone*). Were you? I was waiting outside.

ELOISE. What for?

DARRELL. I wanted to see your husband go.

ELOISE (*rather startled*). He didn't see you?

DARRELL. No, I was very careful about that.

ELOISE (*with a sigh of relief*). He's gone to the bungalow at Lawrence. He won't be back for several days.

DARRELL. Good! That will give us plenty of time to reach our destination. Have you packed? (*Looks anxiously at watch.*)

ELOISE (*in front of the lounge*). No—not yet. How could I?

DARRELL (*at the* R. *end of the lounge*). Well, you'd better begin, hadn't you? We haven't any too much time if we're going to catch that Western Express.

ELOISE. It seems a terrible thing to do, doesn't it?

(*She sinks limply on the lounge.*)

DARRELL. Terrible? Certainly not. It's a wonderful thing to do. You're not beginning to weaken, are you?

Eloise. No-o, but I never realized how awful it was going to be.

Darrell. Good Lord, Eloise, don't take the romance out of it. We've got to go through with it now. I'd be in an awful position if we didn't—especially after calling everything off with Nora.

Eloise (*tensely*). When did you see her?

Darrell. Just a few minutes ago—had her to dinner.

Eloise. What did you tell her?

Darrell. I told her everything. (*He sits* R. *of* Eloise *on the lounge.*) I was perfectly frank with her—I told her she and I were having our farewell dinner—that our engagement was a mistake. (*Takes her hands.*) That I'd met another who was more to me than life itself—— In fact, there wasn't anything that I didn't tell her.

Eloise (*breathlessly*). You didn't tell her my *name*?

Darrell (*casually*). Yes, I did.

Eloise (*rising in astonishment*). Darrell! How could you?

Darrell (*rising, protestingly*). I had to or she wouldn't have believed me.

Eloise (*she crosses* Darrell *to* R.C. *Greatly agitated*). What must she think of *me*? (*She is facing* R.)

Darrell (*standing loverlike with his arms outstretched*). Ah, if she knew you as well as I do, she'd think you were the most wonderful woman in the world. (*He goes to her affectionately and putting his arms about her draws her to him.*) Don't give it a moment's thought, sweetheart. There will never be anyone but you. (*His arms over her shoulders, he takes her hands in his.*) We shall be all in all to each other.

Eloise (*not quite convinced*). Oh, Darry—it seems such a terrible thing to sacrifice everything like this.

Darrell. Life is too short to be wasted with someone who doesn't appreciate or understand.

Eloise (*looking up at him over her shoulder*). And you *do* understand, don't you?

Darrell (*tenderly*). I love you, dear. There is always one real love in every man's life, and my love for you is that love in mine.

Eloise (*in rapture. Taking a step* R., *then turning to face him*). Oh, Darry, you say such beautiful things to me! (*With a quick change of tone.*) I suppose that's because you've had so much experience.

Darrell. Well, it's my experience that makes me sure of myself.

Eloise. And you are quite sure of yourself *this time*?

Darrell. Ab-so-*lutely*.

Eloise (*her hand outstretched accusingly*). And you'll never regret Nora?

Darrell (*taking her hand*). Nora? Nora means no more to me now than a thousand others! (*Bends as though to kiss her hand.*)

Eloise (*quickly snatching her hand away*). A thousand? You didn't tell me there were that many!

Darrell (*quickly covering his mistake*). You know what I mean.

I regret no one—nothing—my real life begins to-night. (*He takes both her hands.*) And so must yours.

Eloise (*joyously*). Darry!

Darrell (*suddenly*). How long will it take you to pack?

Eloise. Not long. I know exactly what I want to take.

Darrell. Well, don't take much. We haven't a great deal of time, remember.

(Eloise *moves toward* L.)

Can you be ready in half an hour?

Eloise (*over* L. *in front of the lounge. Lightly*). Oh, easily.

Darrell (C.). Sure?

Eloise (*as she moves toward door* L.1). I'll be waiting for you.

Darrell (C. *His hands outstretched.* Eloise *turns and comes to him. He takes her hands tenderly*). Good-bye for a little while, then. When you hear the taxi honk *four* times outside, come down.

(*He bends over and hastily kisses her hands.*)

Eloise. Very well.

(*She moves away toward the door* L.1.)

Darrell (*starts away impulsively, but turns at up* R.C. *with another thought*). Oh——! You'll leave the usual note, of course?

Eloise (*over* L.). Note?

Darrell. Yes, for your husband.

Eloise. Oh, is that usual?

Darrell. Oh, always. Otherwise he wouldn't know what had become of you. You can give it to your maid to send to him *after* we've gone.

Eloise (*vaguely*). Oh, yes, of course.

Darrell (*turning up to the arch up* R.C.). In half an hour then.

(*He blows her a kiss and she blows one back to him and he exits into the hall-way. After a short pause the outside door is heard to slam.* Eloise *stands still for an instant listening. When the door slams, she heaves a deep sigh and moves quickly to the push button set in the pilaster above the door* L.F *and rings the bell. As she waits, she crosses above the lounge to the table* R. *and takes a sheet of paper and an envelope from the stationery rack.*)

Annette (*entering hurriedly* L.1). Did you want me, ma'am?

Eloise (*turning with sheet of paper and an envelope in her hand*). Oh yes, Annette! I've been called out of town unexpectedly. I'm going to my uncle's place in Troy.

Annette (*moving to* L. *of* C.). Your uncle, ma'am?

Eloise. Yes, Bishop Kennelly, you know. (*She goes toward the door* L.1.) Pack me some things in a bag at once.

Annette. Yes, ma'am.

Eloise (*over* L.). And put out some travelling things for me to wear.

Annette. Yes, ma'am.

Eloise (*at the door* L.1). And be sure I am ready in half an hour!

Annette (C.L.). *I'll* be ready, ma'am.

Eloise (*a step toward* Annette). Oh, *you* aren't going. I'm going alone.

Annette (*wisely*). Alone, ma'am?

Eloise. Of course, alone! (*Sharply.*) What do you mean?

Annette. I beg your pardon, ma'am, but without a maid—how will madame manage?

Eloise. Leave that to me.

Annette. Very good, ma'am.

Eloise (*glancing at the clock on the mantel up* C.). I must change at once. Come, help me. (*She goes into the bedroom* L.1. *From the room* L.1.) Annette!

Annette (*remains standing for an instant as if in deep thought, then quickly*). Yes, ma'am—I'm coming.

(*She exits into the room* L.1.)

(*There is a pause, then* Hilary *is heard speaking to* Carter *out in the hall-way.*)

Hilary (*out in the hall-way*). Are you sure you didn't pick it up? (*He enters quickly, followed by* Carter, *the latter in rather a perturbed state. Glancing about rapidly as he comes down.*) I had it in my hands a moment before I left, I thought I'd given it to you to take out.

Carter (*up* R., *looking around for the case*). No, sir, I don't remember even seeing your manuscript case.

Hilary (*moving up to the desk up* R.C.). It must be here somewhere. (*He looks in the desk. The door bell rings.*) See who that is.

Carter. Yes, sir.

(*He exits into the hall-way up* R.C.)

Hilary (*without waiting for Carter's "Yes, sir"*). I'll have a look for it. (*He moves down and front of the lounge toward* L.1.) Perhaps I left it in my room.

(*As he reaches the head of the lounge he sees his case among pillows and picks it up, smiling.*)

Carter (*enters from the hall-way*). It's Mrs. Gail, sir.

Hilary (L.C.). Oh, you'd better tell Mrs. Farrington.

Carter (*up* R. *of the arch*). She asked for you, sir.

Hilary (*surprised*). Me?

Nora (*enters quickly from the hall-way and comes down to* Hilary). Hello, Hilary!

(Carter *exits into the hall-way.*)

Hilary. Nora! What in the world——

Nora (C.R.). Thought I'd run in and say how d'ye do.

Hilary (C.L., *taking her hand cordially*). Delighted to see you, of course——

Nora. Why "of course"? I've probably prevented you from doing something you want to do and in your heart you're cursing me at this moment.

Hilary. Nonsense! You're one of the few persons I'm always glad to see.

Nora. That's being polite at any rate. As a matter of fact, I had to see you, so I took the chance of finding you in.

Hilary. I was just leaving. Had left, in fact, for the Long Island bungalow; but missed my manuscript case and came back to look for it.

Nora. How fortunate!

Hilary (*indicates the chair* L. *of the table* R.). Sit down—(*starts for the door* L.1)—and I'll tell Eloise you're here.

Nora (*quickly*). No, don't. It's *you* I came to see.

Hilary (*turns to her from over* L.). Me?

Nora. Don't look so pained. (*She sits* L. *of the table* R.) I'm not going to keep you very long.

Hilary (*moving toward her*). Do I look pained? I'm only surprised at seeing you so unexpectedly. I thought you were down in the country.

Nora. I am—came up this afternoon to dine with a friend.

Hilary (C.). A man?

Nora. I said "a friend." At least, he was a friend—until I dined with him.

Hilary. You will take chances, Nora.

Nora. Not in the way you mean. This happened to be a gentleman I'm very fond of and naturally when he asked me to dine, I had every reason to expect a somewhat pleasant evening.

Hilary. And wasn't it?

Nora. Hardly. I expected a heavenly dinner with love and romance to follow, and what I got—nearly killed me.

Hilary. *Love* and *romance* with a *friend*, Nora. Is that being quite fair to McKnight?

Nora. Why not?

Hilary. I understood you were engaged to him.

Nora. So did I.

Hilary. I see. He found out about this dinner and broke it off.

Nora. No, no—it was Darry I dined with.

Hilary. Oh——!

Nora. That's what I came over to talk about.

Hilary (*as if to avoid an unpleasant subject. He moves to above the table* R.). Well, if you'll excuse me I don't think I want to talk about him. (*Places the manuscript case on the table.*)

NORA (*rising and going to* L.C.). Oh, I know you don't like Darry, but I had to talk to somebody about him.

HILARY (*taking off his overcoat*). Frankly, I never *could* understand what you women see in that fellow.

NORA. I suppose it is difficult to understand—but he makes love divinely—and that means a lot to a widow. (*Turns up to the head of the lounge and sits on head.*)

HILARY (*dropping his overcoat over back of chair* L. *of table*). Well, I'm sorry if I seem to be unsympathetic, but if your engagement is really broken off, I congratulate you.

NORA. I'm not sure that it is really broken off.

HILARY. Oh, I understood you to say——

NORA. Yes, that was the impression he gave me.

HILARY (*taking a step away from the table*). You don't mean to tell me that he broke it off?

NORA (*slipping out of her evening wrap which falls on the head of the lounge*). Darry always was deliciously frank, you know.

HILARY. I should think your pride alone would prevent you even thinking of him again.

(*He comes to* C.L.)

NORA. A woman has no pride when love is concerned and I want to save him from a great mistake.

(*She rises from the head of the lounge and sits on the centre of the lounge.*)

HILARY. The mistake, of course, being another woman?

NORA. Naturally—although I hadn't suspected it until he told me.

HILARY. Did he tell you her name?

(*He sits* R. *of* NORA *on the lounge.*)

NORA. Oh yes, he told me everything. That's why he asked me to dine—our farewell dinner, he called it—just to commemorate the passing of another emotion. Meaning ours. He hadn't known her long, but their *souls* were old friends—married, of course. He specializes in married women. It's so much safer. Neglected by her husband who doesn't understand her—which is also unusual—they knew at a glance that they were meant for each other. Therefore, to be honest with himself, he had to tell me so that I might feel free to make other arrangements. (*She smiles at* HILARY *and they both laugh.*) Sweet of him, wasn't it?

HILARY (*laughing*). Yes, it's fortunate you have a sense of humour. But I feel sorry for the husband. Did he tell you who it was?

NORA. Oh, yes.

HILARY. Asked you to keep it secret, I suppose?

NORA. Yes, and that's why I'm going to tell *you* all about it!

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

HILARY (*rising and moving to above the table* R.). Thanks, but it's no concern of mine——

NORA. *Indeed it is.* Outside of myself, *you're* the one most *vitally* concerned.

HILARY (*taking up his hat from the table*). How so?

NORA. *You* are the husband.

HILARY (*a pause. He looks at* NORA, *then explodes*). What! (*Drops his hat on the table.*)

NORA. And *your wife* is the lady whose soul is attuned to his.

HILARY. I don't believe it.

NORA. I have his word for it and, as I told you, Darry is deliciously frank.

HILARY (*he goes front of* NORA *toward* L.1 *as though to call* ELOISE. *At* L.1 *he turns and speaks*). But it's so wildly absurd. She's never even mentioned his name to me.

NORA. Clever Eloise!

HILARY. No, she's not clever, and I don't believe a word of it.

(*He goes above the lounge to up* C.)

NORA. The husband is usually the first to believe, though often the last to suspect. But now that you do know, what are you going to do about it?

(*She rises.*)

HILARY (*coming down* R. *of the table* R. *to front of the table*). But it's all so unexpected—I don't know what to say. I'll have to think it out, and if there is any truth in it . . .

NORA. Oh, there's no doubt about it.

HILARY (C.R.). Then I'll have to see Eloise and have a frank talk with her.

NORA. That won't do any good.

HILARY. But, I believe in her.

NORA. Then go to Lawrence and behave as if nothing had happened.

(*She sits on the lounge.*)

HILARY. I will. (*He goes up to above the table* R. *and takes up his hat and coat.*) I won't insult her by even suspecting her. If there is any truth in it, she'll tell me when I get back.

(*He takes up his manuscript case.*)

NORA. She won't be here when you get back.

HILARY. Why not?

NORA. She intends to elope with Darrell—*to-night.*

HILARY (*drops his hat on the table, his coat on the chair*). Elope?

NORA. I was hoping you would do something to prevent it without my telling you this.

HILARY. (*moving to* C.). Are you *sure*?

NORA (*emphatically*). Positive. He said that you were going away to-night and that by the time you got back he and Eloise would be safely settled somewhere out West.

HILARY (*stares unbelievingly at her, then suddenly starts for the room* L.1). *I'll soon settle this!*

NORA (*rising quickly and detaining him by catching his arm after he has crossed her nearly to the door*). Now, don't call Eloise, or you'll make matters worse.

HILARY. They couldn't be any worse, and I want her to tell me the truth.

(*He starts for the door again.*)

NORA (*pulling him away to* C.L.). Yes, and spoil the whole thing.

HILARY. You don't expect me to remain passive, do you?

NORA. I expect you to act sensibly, or I wouldn't have *told* you about it.

HILARY. Why did you tell me about it?

NORA. Not for your sake, nor for Eloise's. I wanted to keep Darry from making a fool of himself. After all, I am fond of him and I don't intend to lose him if I can help it.

HILARY (L.C.). You mean to tell me you still want this fellow after the disgraceful way he's treated you? Why?

NORA (C.L.). Does a woman ever know why she wants a man—except that she wants him? Darry has his good points—though they're hard to discover. Besides, he's very difficult to manage, and that's an incentive to a woman, isn't it?

HILARY. Upon my soul, I never shall understand you women.

(*He sits on the lounge.*)

NORA. In spite of the fact that you write novels and are accustomed to analyse our emotions? (*She steps to him.*) Oh, *what* a confession!

HILARY. Don't be sarcastic. What do you think I should do?

NORA. (*sitting* R. *of* HILARY *on the lounge*). Do you really want to *keep Eloise*?

HILARY. She's my wife, isn't she?

NORA. Do you really love her?

HILARY. Certainly.

NORA. And you want to help her as well as yourself?

HILARY. Of course, I do. (*He rises.*) If this thing *is* true it's because he's made her dissatisfied. He's taken advantage of her youth and inexperience.

(*He goes above the lounge to up* C.)

NORA (*on the lounge, turning to face him*). That's right, Hilary. Don't blame yourself for anything. No husband ever does. It's enough that you married her. What more could she ask of you?

HILARY (*coming down* C.). I've given her everything a sane woman *could* ask for.

(*He paces up and down* C.)

NORA. Ah, but a woman in love isn't sane. She demands affection and a whole lot of attention and if she doesn't get it from the one she's entitled to get it from—she seeks it elsewhere. Take yourself to-night. (*She rises.*) You were leaving for Lawrence.

HILARY. I have my work to do. *She* understands that.

(*He turns up stage.*)

NORA (C.L.). Did you ask her to go with you?

HILARY. (*up* C.R.). I did. And she refused.

NORA. You probably made her feel you didn't want her.

HILARY (*coming down*). I couldn't lie about it. I always prefer to be alone when I'm working.

(*He turns up stage.*)

NORA. And she probably put it up to you as a last test, to see if you cared.

HILARY (*coming down to* NORA). It's no use your trying to put the blame on me. I haven't anything to reproach myself with. But I confess this thing has upset me—terribly.

(*He stops suddenly as he hears* ELOISE *speak in the room* L.1.)

ELOISE (*off* L.1). Annette! (NORA *and* HILARY *look quickly to* L.1.) You'd better give it to Carter, he'll look after it.

ANNETTE (*also in room* L.1). I can carry it, ma'am.

NORA (*quickly going to the head of the lounge for her wrap*). Isn't there some other place?

HILARY. What?

NORA (*moving with her wrap to up* C.R.). Isn't there some other place? She's coming!

HILARY. Yes. (*He grabs up his hat and coat.*) Out here.

(*They both go quickly out into the hall.* NORA *preceding* HILARY.)

(*The door opens* L.1 *and* ELOISE *enters, followed by* ANNETTE *who carries a suit-case.*)

ELOISE (*stepping above the* L. *end of the lounge to look at the clock on the mantel*). What time is it, Annette?

ANNETTE (*looking at the clock on the mantel as she crosses to* C.). Nine-thirty, ma'am. (*Turns to face* ELOISE *as she places the suit-case on the* R. *end of the lounge.*)

ELOISE. Heavens, and I'm not ready yet! (*Suddenly thinks of the letter in her hand and comes to in front of the* L. *end of the lounge.*) Oh, Annette, my uncle's message came after Mr. Farrington had gone, so I've written a note to him explaining. Be sure and post it to him in the morning. (*She goes to* ANNETTE.) It's stamped and addressed. (*Gives the letter to* ANNETTE.)

ANNETTE (*taking the note*). Yes, ma'am.

ELOISE (*goes quickly to the door* L.1). Come and help me with this dress.

(*She exits* L.1, *closing the door.*)

ANNETTE. Just one moment, ma'am.

(*She kneels to lock the suit-case.*)

HILARY (*enters from the hall-way up* R.C. *and comes down on the* R. *of* ANNETTE, *dropping his coat and hat on the chair* L. *of the table* R. *as he passes*). What are you doing, Annette?

ANNETTE (*startled. Springing to her feet with the case in her hand*). Oh, Mr. Farrington, sir—you've come just in time!

HILARY. Anything wrong?

ANNETTE. Yes, sir—(*giving him the letter*)—Mrs. Farrington left this letter to be posted to you. She's going away, sir.

HILARY (C.R.). Going away? What do you mean, going away?

ANNETTE (C.). I know the signs. I was with Lady Bradhurst in England when *she* went—and I was with her when *he* left her in Monte Carlo. I don't want to see it happen to Mrs. Farrington, sir. She's too young to understand what she's doing.

ELOISE (*in the room* L.1, *calling*). Annette!

ANNETTE. Yes, ma'am. I'm coming. (*Picks up the case. She moves a few steps to the* L. *and turns to* HILARY.) Don't be hard on her, sir. It's just that she's young and wants petting.

ELOISE (*in the room* L.1). Annette! Where are you? (*Entering from* L.1 *in travelling dress not entirely fastened at the back.*) You know I'm in a hurry! (*She sees* HILARY *and stops transfixed, after stepping down stage to clear the door for* ANNETTE'S *exit.*) Hilary!

(ANNETTE, *after a look at both of them sneaks off behind* ELOISE *into the room* L.1, *taking the case with her.*)

HILARY (*when* ANNETTE *is off*). I left my manuscript case and came back for it.

ELOISE (*over* L.). Oh, I didn't expect you.

HILARY (*indicating the letter in his hand*). Obviously.

ELOISE (*moving as though to take the letter from him*). There's no need for it now. I'll tell you what's in it.

HILARY (*gently fending her off. Opening the envelope and extracting the letter*). I prefer to read it myself—(*he looks sternly at her*)—if you don't mind.

ELOISE (*weakly, backing away*). Hilary——

HILARY (*standing* C., *reads the letter aloud quite casually*). MY DEAR HILARY,—I don't think what I am going to do will grieve you very much after the first shock has worn off, because it must be as evident to you as it is to me that we are entirely unsuited to each other, and life is too short to waste it with someone you do not love. So I am going away with someone I do love and who loves me. I must be all in all to a man, Hilary, and I was only a very small part in your life.

I hope you will find someone better suited to you and who will make you far happier than I could ever hope to make you. Faithfully yours—(*he looks quickly at* ELOISE *and then back at the letter as though he must have read it wrong*)—faithfully yours, ELOISE.

(*He folds the letter in silence.*)

ELOISE (*after a pause*). I didn't mean you to get it till—afterwards. (HILARY *gives her a sharp look. She sinks down helplessly on the lounge.*) It makes it terribly awkward, doesn't it?

HILARY (C.). So you have found out that you don't love me as much as you thought you did?

ELOISE (*frankly*). I've found out that I never loved you, Hilary. But I didn't realize it soon enough, that's all.

HILARY. You were only a year younger when you married me.

ELOISE (*blandly*). Yes, but I've been married since then and that makes all the difference in the world.

HILARY (C.). I see. So when you suggested me staying here to-night or when you spoke of going with me to Lawrence it was only done to prevent me suspecting.

ELOISE. No. I wanted to find out if you really cared, and I found out you didn't.

HILARY. And is that when you made up your mind?

ELOISE. That's when I decided definitely—yes.

HILARY (C.). I see. And this other man—who is he?

ELOISE (*lightly*). I don't see that that makes any difference.

HILARY. You don't suppose I'm going to let you go away with—just anybody, do you?

ELOISE. I don't quite see how you can stop me!

HILARY. I might!

ELOISE. No, you could only delay me. If I don't go to-night, there is to-morrow, you know—and the next day. You can't watch me all the time, can you?

HILARY (*rather indifferently*). No-o—that's true. Besides, I'm not sure that I *want* to stop you. If you don't love me, why—you DON'T and that's all there is to it. There's nothing more to be said. It wouldn't be *right* for me to keep you here against your will—no matter how much I wanted it.

ELOISE (*surprised*). Do you mean that?

HILARY. Do I *look* the kind of man who would hold a woman against her will?

ELOISE (*hesitatingly*). No-o—but——

HILARY (C.). Still, I owe it to myself to see that this—other man is worthy of you. I owe that much to myself. (*A short pause.*) Well, won't you tell me his name? (ELOISE *hesitates uncomfortably, turning her face away.*) You're not *ashamed* of it, are you?

ELOISE (*rising quickly and facing him*). No, I'm proud of it—it's—Darrell McKnight!

HILARY (*apparently annoyed at his own denseness. He moves to*

front of the table R.). Darrell McKnight! Of course! I might have known it!

ELOISE (*surprised, somewhat disturbed*). And *why* might you have known it?

HILARY (*turning and facing her*). Because his specialty is making love to other men's wives!

ELOISE (*loftily, defending* DARRELL). Oh, I know he hasn't been a saint. He told me he had fancied himself in love before.

HILARY (*moving to* C.). Only fancied, eh?

ELOISE. Well—we all make mistakes!

HILARY. Are you sure he isn't mistaken this time?

ELOISE (*pointing the line*). Positive. He feels *differently* about me than about *any woman he has ever known.*

HILARY. How do you know that?

ELOISE (*impatiently, resenting*). He told me so himself!

HILARY. Then of course that settles it!

ELOISE (L.C., *front of the lounge*). If you are trying to insinuate that he tells me what isn't true, you may as well save yourself the trouble. I *know* that he is everything fine and noble!

HILARY. Did he tell you that, himself, too?

ELOISE. Don't try to be *funny*!

HILARY (*crosses to* ELOISE). Very well. I'll be serious. Is it fine and noble to sneak into another man's home and steal his wife?

ELOISE. Love makes us do many ignoble things, Hilary. That's what you don't understand because you don't know what love—real love—is.

HILARY (*grimly*). Don't I? (ELOISE *shakes her head.*) Well, perhaps I don't.

(*He turns away a step or two to* C.R.)

ELOISE (*in a friendly fashion*). At first when I came in and found you here, I was *sorry*, but now I'm glad.

HILARY (*turns and faces her curiously*). Why?

ELOISE (*sweetly*). Because now we can part friends, can't we? And you can tell me that you—(*a slight quaver creeps into her voice*)—forgive me for this step I'm taking.

HILARY. Do you want me to forgive you?

ELOISE. Yes.

HILARY. Well, I suppose I must then!

(*He offers his hand.*)

ELOISE (*taking his hand in great relief*). Thank you, Hilary!

HILARY (*joyfully yet quite matter-of-factly*). Don't mention it! (*As though taking a delighted interest in her leaving.*) Where are you meeting him?

ELOISE. He's coming here for me. (*She turns up* C.L. *to glance at the clock on the mantel and then continues above the lounge to the door* L.1, *speaking as she moves.*) Good Heavens! It's about time

and I'm not ready! (*Throwing open the door* L.1 *and calling.*) Annette! (*Reaching up over her* L. *shoulder and starting to tug at the fastenings of her gown as she moves to the front of the lounge.*)

HILARY (*calmly*). You'd better hurry. Men hate to be kept waiting.

ELOISE (*impatiently stamping her foot and calling*). Annette!

ANNETTE (*off stage* L.1, *answering faintly*). Coming, ma'am.

(ELOISE *tugs frantically at her gown.*)

HILARY (*pleasantly*). Can *I* be of any assistance?

ELOISE (*trying to fasten the gown*). No, thanks, I can manage.

HILARY (*interrupting, good-humouredly*). I've had some experience with that gown, you know, and I'm quite sure you can't reach it!

ELOISE (*with a glance at the door through which* ANNETTE *is due to arrive. Pleasantly grateful.*) Very well, then—if you don't mind! (*Goes to* HILARY *and turns her back to him to be fastened.*)

HILARY (*moving to be above her as he works at the fastenings*). Not at all. (*He begins to hook her up.*) This is the gown you wore the night *we* eloped, isn't it?

ELOISE (*lying*). Is it? I don't remember. I put it on because Annette laid it out for me.

HILARY (*still hooking*). *I* remember distinctly. I remember *un*-hooking you—(ELOISE *gives him a shocked look*)—and noticing for the first time how the hair curls on the nape of your neck. (*He finishes and steps back to admire.*) It's charming! You ought to keep that especially for an eloping gown.

ELOISE (*shocked, annoyed*). Hilary!

HILARY. It's charming.

ANNETTE (*entering from room* L.1, *carrying the case*). You called, ma'am?

ELOISE (*turning to* ANNETTE). Yes. Bring my bag. (*Takes the case from* ANNETTE, *puts it* L. *of table* R.)

ANNETTE. Yes, ma'am—it's quite ready.

(*She turns to exit* L.1.)

HILARY (*stopping her*). Just a moment, Annette. (*To* ELOISE.) Is that all you're going to take with you?

ELOISE (R.). There wasn't time to pack any more. You can send the rest of my things after me. Annette will see to them.

HILARY (*still more surprised*). Annette——? Do you mean to say you are not taking Annette with you?

ELOISE (*frowning*). No—of course not!

HILARY (*deeply concerned*). But—my dear child—you're making a great mistake. Half of a woman's charm lies in her dainty freshness, her immaculate appearance, her dazzling raiment——

ELOISE (*horrified*). Oh! Please——!

HILARY (*continuing calmly*). Especially on the honeymoon!

ELOISE (*with a shocked glance at* ANNETTE). Hilareee! Annette!

HILARY (*smiling*). Nonsense, my dear. You don't suppose you can pull the wool over Annette's eyes, do you ?

(*He goes to* ANNETTE *who is over* L. *by the door.*)

Annette, do you know where your mistress is going ?

ANNETTE (*demurely, innocently*). To her uncle, the Bishop's, sir.

HILARY. Yes, I know that's what she told you ! Do you know where she is really going ?

ELOISE (C.). Hilary, this is outrageous !

ANNETTE. Well, sir——

HILARY. Come—speak up—the truth now ! Don't be frightened.

ANNETTE. Of course, I don't know, sir ; but I suspect that—— (*She pauses.*)

HILARY. Of course you do. (*Turns to* ELOISE.) You don't suppose you can keep a thing like that from the servants, do you ? From husbands, yes. From servants, never !

ELOISE (*turning away to* R. *front of the table*). Oh !

HILARY (*moving a few steps toward her*). Now do be guided by me and take Annette ! You know you don't look half the woman you should unless you're properly groomed and titivated.

ELOISE (*angrily*). Indeed !

HILARY (C.L. *frankly*). Clothes make even more difference to you than to most women.

ELOISE (*down* R.). You needn't be spiteful and insulting.

(HILARY *takes the case from* ELOISE.)

HILARY (*surprised, reproachful*). My dear child ! (*He moves to the lounge.*) I am trying to be your true friend. I want you—(*he sits on the lounge, placing the case on the lounge on his* R.)—to look your very best. (*Over his shoulder to* ANNETTE.) Now, Annette, what have we here ? (*He opens the case.*)

ANNETTE. Just bare necessities, sir. I packed for a trip to the Bishop.

HILARY. This is nothing to do with the Bishop. We'll need a different outfit altogether. (*He begins to draw out the contents.*) What's this ?

ANNETTE. A—a négligée, sir.

HILARY. White ?

ANNETTE. I chose white on account of the Bishop, sir.

HILARY (*the négligée in his hand*). But this is not for the Bishop. Get a pink one, with lots of fluff about it. Men like pink, especially in the morning. It's so cheerful !

(*He tosses the white négligée to* ANNETTE.)

ANNETTE (*catching the négligée*). Yes, sir.

(*She exits,* L.)

(ELOISE R. *by the front of the table impatiently tapping her foot.*)

ELOISE (*crossing angrily to him*). I won't have you interfering like this ?

HILARY. But you don't understand. I have only your interest at heart.

ELOISE (*angrily*). Oh ! !

(*She turns away to* R.C.)

ANNETTE (*entering* L.1 *with a fluffy pink négligée*). Will this do, sir ?

HILARY (*rising and taking it.* ELOISE *tries to take it ; he transfers it* R. *to* L. *hands*). Ah, that's better ! (*He sniffs it.*) Ah—sachet—charming ! (*He sniffs again, ecstatically.*) I really displayed a most discriminating taste when I selected that. I hope McKnight will appreciate it.

ELOISE (*angrily*). You are—*exasperating* ! (*Crosses to* R.)

HILARY. Annette—can't you find a steamer trunk ?

ANNETTE (*at the door* L.1). Yes, sir.

HILARY. Well, bring it in !

ANNETTE (*eagerly*). I'll get it at once, sir !

(*She exits room* L.1.)

HILARY (L.C. *Pleasantly to* ELOISE, *who is over* R. *nearly bursting with exasperation*). A steamer trunk full of finery will make the honeymoon last at least a week longer !

ELOISE (R. *front of table. Turning to him furiously*). One would think my attractiveness began and ended with my clothes !

HILARY (*rising*). Not at all. (*Steps to* C. *She turns away.*) But I understand men, my dear, and I know McKnight. He never made love to a dowdy woman in his life.

(ELOISE *shrugs.*)

ANNETTE (*enters* L.1, *dragging an empty steamer trunk*). Will this do, sir ?

HILARY (*crosses quickly to her and takes the trunk*). Oh, splendidly.

(*He drags the trunk to* C.)

ELOISE (*advancing to* R. *of* HILARY. *Furiously, after the trunk is* C.). But, I—don't—want—it !

HILARY. Now, my dear ! Do be guided by me in this.

(ELOISE, *exasperated, moves to* R. *He leans casually on the trunk.*)

Now let me see. Oh, Annette——

(ANNETTE, *who has started to exit, stops at the door* L.1.)

(*To* ELOISE.) Where is that orange-coloured dress you wore at the Neilson's dance ?

(ELOISE *turns away to over* R., *exasperated.*)

ANNETTE. Orange-coloured dress?

HILARY (*frowning as he strives to describe it*). Yes, a soft gauzy-looking thing; you think you can see through it, but you can't. Seems to me it had a bit of black here and there——

ANNETTE. The mousseline-de-soie!

HILARY. The what?

ANNETTE (*repeats*). The mousseline-de-soie!

HILARY (*beaming*). Yes, that sounds like it.

ANNETTE. Shall I bring it in, sir?

HILARY. Yes, with all its fixings—and everything else you can find!

(ANNETTE *starts to go.*)

Oh—and that green snakey one.

ANNETTE (*over* L. *near door*). The *snakey* one?

HILARY (*to* ELOISE). The one you wore at the concert a few weeks ago.

ELOISE (*over* R., *impatiently*). He means the *green spangle* from *Callot*!

(*She goes up* R. *of table.*)

ANNETTE. Oh, yes—to be sure.

HILARY. And that rose-pink one with the little silver fandangles all over it.

ELOISE. That's worn out—it's in rags!

HILARY. That's too bad, McKnight would have liked it. Well—the one you wore at our last dinner party—the shivery one.

ANNETTE. Shivery one?

HILARY (*to* ELOISE). You know, my dear—the one you wore the night Nora Gail dined here?

ELOISE (*up* R. *between table and window. Distractedly; with a nervous outburst*). He means the purple and silver!

HILARY (*jubilantly*). The purple and silver. (*Takes the trunk which is standing on end and lowers it to the floor.*)

ANNETTE. Oh yes, sir. At once, sir!

(*She exits hasily* L.1.)

ELOISE (*coming down to* R. *of* HILARY). I can't think of taking all those things!

HILARY. You would be mad to go without them. Do as you like, of course, but I warn you—you'll spoil the whole elopement.

(*He sits on the trunk, facing* R.)

ELOISE. Well, it's my elopement, isn't it? I should think if you cared anything about me you'd try to keep me from going at all!

(*She moves to front of table* R.)

HILARY (*loosening the trunk clasps*). Why, I wouldn't dream of interfering. My first thought is always your happiness.

ELOISE (R. *in front of the table—provoked*). I believe you're glad to get rid of me!

HILARY (*lightly*). On the contrary. But, I don't want to distress you by betraying my grief.

ELOISE. If that's sarcasm, I must say it's in very poor taste.

HILARY (*rising*). It *isn't* sarcasm. It's the downright honest attitude of a sportmanslike loser! I want to prove to you that I'm man enough to grin, even though my dreams may be dead and my future in ashes.

(*He bends over and raises the cover of the trunk.*)

ANNETTE (*enters* L.1, *with gowns, lingerie, waists, stockings and slippers, etc., over her arms*). Here you are, sir!

(*She crosses to* HILARY.)

HILARY (*reaching out his arms to receive them.* ANNETTE *lays the gowns, etc., over his arms*). Ah! *That's* more like it! Are these *all*?

ANNETTE. Yes, sir.

HILARY. Then you'd better get your *own* things ready.

ANNETTE. Yes, sir.

(*She exits* L.1.)

HILARY (*to* ELOISE). Let me call your attention to the way I pack, my dear.

(*He drops the arms full of clothing into a disordered heap on the floor* R. *of the trunk.*)

ELOISE (*horrified*). Oh!!

HILARY. I'm really quite an artist at it!

(*He selects a frock and spreading it carefully on the carpet by the trunk he kneels on it and makes ready to pack, half-humming, half-singing "An Old Fashioned Wife." He takes up another frock and rolls it up and throws it in the trunk.*)

ELOISE (*watches him for a moment, then crosses slowly to the chair* L. *of the table and sits. When* HILARY *gets half-way through the song, she speaks. Protestingly, a tearful note in her voice*). You know you don't love me, Hilary—not as you are capable of loving some brainier woman—some more experienced woman—the sort that reads your books and raves over you and talks about—egos and the nebular hypothesis.

HILARY (*he has scarcely paid any attention to her speech, being busy with the packing. He is now folding carelessly the green spangled gown and speaks as he puts it in the trunk. Indifferently*). Don't I?

ELOISE (*passionately*). No! Oh, we care for each other in a sort

of way, I suppose—but not tremendously—(*in ecstasy*)—not with a fierce, triumphant, all-absorbing passion!

HILARY (*busy with the packing. Dispassionately*). No? Well, perhaps you're right. (*Another gown into the trunk.*)

ELOISE (*rising quickly, provoked at his indifference*). You know I'm right, but you won't be frank enough to admit it. I believe you are just as anxious to have this divorce as I am, only you won't come right out and say so!

(*She turns away* R. *to front of the table.*)

HILARY (*stops packing and looks up*). Do you want me to—come right out and say so?

ELOISE. Of course I do. It would make me feel a lot more comfortable if I were sure you didn't mind my leaving you.

HILARY (*folding a gown*). Very well, then. This is the happiest night of my life!

ELOISE (*in front of table* R. *Aghast*). What?

HILARY. The happiest since my wedding night, I mean. Of course I was happy that night, because I thought a lot of things about you that weren't true!

ELOISE. Oh, did you?

HILARY (*taking up three slippers*). Yes. I had no idea then, that I was marrying a pretty, frivolous, vain, empty-headed little doll!

ELOISE (*angrily*). *Hilary!*

HILARY. When you married me, you thought matrimony was going to be an absolute monarchy, with you for monarch and me for prime minister—(*he slams a slipper in the trunk*)—courtier—(*slams another slipper into trunk*)—and slave! (*Throws the third slipper in with a bang.*)

ELOISE. How perfectly absurd!

HILARY. I believe matrimony to be a republic of two, each bearing burdens and both sharing benefits.

ELOISE (*calm but furious*). You didn't make ours turn out that way, did you?

HILARY (*taking up a pink silk stocking*). How could I, with never a thought in your head but teas, dances, theatres and clothes? (*He dabs at his face with the stocking as though using a handkerchief.*) No, my dear—we were sadly unsuited to one another—(*he puts the stocking in his breast pocket*)—and if you are going to be happy with McKnight—(*realizes that the stocking is not a handkerchief and pitches it into the trunk*)—well, all I can say is—good luck and God-speed.

ELOISE. (*tearfully*). I think you are perfectly horrible! (*Then explosively, going close to him.*) It's a good thing I decided to leave of my own accord! I suppose if I hadn't, you'd soon have turned me out!

HILARY (*still on his knees by the trunk*). You know me too well to think I should ever dream of doing a thing like that.

(*A motor-horn is heard tooting four times outside window* R. ELOISE, *startled, looks front.*)

What's that?

(*The sound of the horn is repeated.*)

A signal?

ELOISE. Yes. (*She runs quickly to the window* R. *and looks out. She turns to* HILARY). It's Darrell. (*She crosses above the table* R. *to above the lounge* L. *and takes up the case; speaking as she moves.*) I'll go down and meet him in the taxi!

HILARY (*he rises*). Nonsense! We'll have him in! (*He dumps the balance of the clothing into the trunk.*) I should like a few words with him myself.

(*He steps up and rings the bell on the* L. *of the arch up* R.C.)

ELOISE (*above the* R. *end of the lounge. Shocked*). Never!

HILARY. Oh, don't be frightened! I'm not going to make a presentation speech. I only want to satisfy myself he's going to do the right thing by you!

ELOISE. Well, you needn't trouble—I trust him, implicitly!

HILARY (*up* R.C.). Obviously—but I don't!

CARTER (*enters from the hall-way up* R.C.). Did you ring, sir?

HILARY (*turns to* CARTER). Mr. McKnight is at the door in a taxi—just say to him that Mrs. Farrington wishes him to come in.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He starts to exit.*)

HILARY. Say *Mrs.* Farrington, mind.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He exits into the hall-way.*)

(HILARY *comes down to the trunk and, tucking in the various garments, makes ready to lock the trunk.*)

ELOISE (*as* CARTER *exits*). How can you do such a thing? I never heard of a husband behaving as you are—in a situation like this!

HILARY (*sitting on the trunk, his back to* ELOISE *and locking the trunk*). Exactly! They usually use cuss words—have fireworks—break the furniture—throw things—but you see, my dear, most husbands are not as clever as I am.

ANNETTE (*enters* L.1 *with* ELOISE'S *coat and hat*). Your hat and coat, ma'am.

(*She places the coat and hat on the head of the lounge.*)

HILARY (*rising*). Annette!

ANNETTE (*over* L.). Yes, sir?

HILARY. Make haste. Get your things. You'll be leaving with Mrs. Farrington almost immediately.

ANNETTE. Very good, sir.

(*She exits* L.1, *closing the door.*)

ELOISE (*she crosses above the lounge to the head and takes up her hat*). Darrell will be perfectly furious!

(*She jerks her hat down on her head.*)

HILARY. You leave Darrell to me.

ELOISE (*decisively; grabbing up her coat*). Very well! I *will* leave him to you.

(*She turns to go out the door* L.1, *but* HILARY'S *voice stops her.*)

HILARY (*taking a step toward her*). I prefer you to remain—if you don't mind.

ELOISE (*over* L. *by the door*). But I do mind!

HILARY (*he goes to* ELOISE. *Sternly, commandingly*). Just to oblige me!

(*He takes her by the hand and backs toward* C. *leading her. She follows, yielding unwillingly. He passes her across in front of him to* C. *and seats her forcibly on the trunk. He goes up between the trunk and the lounge to the desk up* R. *of the fireplace and opening the drawer takes out a small automatic revolver which he slips in his* R.*-hand coat pocket. He glances out into the hall-way as he moves along the rear of the room and coming down* R. *of the table* R. *to the down* R. *corner he takes a cigarette from his case.*)

DARRELL (*enters quickly from the hall-way. He does not see* HILARY *and comes quickly down to* R. *of* ELOISE, *speaking as he enters*). I say, Eloise—what the deuce is the matter? You said you'd be ready——

HILARY (*over* R. *He coughs and* DARRELL *looks at him in amazement. Pleasantly*). Good evening, McKnight!

DARRELL (*almost speechless*). O-oh—good evening—(*he moves above the trunk to* L. *of* ELOISE. *Puzzled, floundering*)—I—I was just passing—and I—thought—I'd drop in.

HILARY (*moving forward to front of the table* R.). Yes, I heard you passing—that's why I sent Carter for you!

(*He strikes a match at the matchstand on the table and lights his cigarette.*)

DARRELL (*dumbfoundedly*). You—sent Carter——?

ELOISE (*on the trunk* C., *she looks up at* DARRELL—*sharply*). You needn't lie about it, Darrell. He came back unexpectedly and found the note you wanted me to write him.

DARRELL. Oh, I see—— (*Doggedly—on the defensive. To* HILARY.) Well? What are you going to do about it?

HILARY (R. *of* ELOISE, *in front of the table* R.). Sit down and we'll talk it over.

DARRELL. Sorry, but I haven't much time. I'm taking a train for the West in just three-quarters of an hour.

(*He looks at* ELOISE.)

HILARY (*advancing a step or two*). The West?—The West? You mean to spend your honeymoon—on a train?

DARRELL (*gasping*). Honeymoon?

HILARY. Well, let's *call* it that. You mean to take my wife with you—to-night—on a *train*?

DARRELL (*defiantly*). Suppose I do——?

HILARY. Why—the idea is absolutely ridiculous—preposterous—opposed to the very first principles of romance!

DARRELL (*curiously*). What do you mean?

(ELOISE *sits dazedly looking front.*)

HILARY (R. *of* ELOISE). Don't you realize that the first fleeting moments are the most intoxicating, the most exhilarating, the most entrancing? A rattling, smoky train! Oh, it's unthinkable; simply unthinkable!

(*He turns away* R. *and flicks the ashes from his cigarette to the ash-tray on the table* R.)

DARRELL (*he stares at* HILARY *dazedly, then crosses front of* ELOISE *to* R.C. *He turns and looks at* ELOISE, *but gets no encouragement from her. Then turns to* HILARY). But—we'll *have* to leave town, you know—and . . .

HILARY (R. *front of the table*). Yes, I know—but not on a train.

DARRELL (*stupidly*). No?

HILARY (*shaking his head*). No. What you want is some lovely delightful solitude where you'll be undisturbed.

DARRELL (*to* HILARY, *after another hopeless glance at* ELOISE). What would you suggest?

HILARY. You must go to some place near—some place that can be reached in a car.

ELOISE (*sarcastically*). Oh, must we?

HILARY (*eloquently*). Think of spinning through the mysterious night—side by side—think of arriving in a few hours at some cosy little bungalow—far from the haunts of men! Think of sitting in the garden—in the moonlight—of roaming hand in hand along the sandy beach—and bathing in the sea! *That's* the sort of setting for such a love as yours—a love that has swept you both off your feet! (*Changing his tone.*) You want a place like mine at Lawrence.

(*He turns away* R. *a few steps.*)

DARRELL *and* ELOISE (*in unison*). Lawrence!

(ELOISE *rises.*)

HILARY (*turns to them quickly—startled by the inspiration*). Why not? It's open and ready to receive you! An ideal spot!

(DARRELL L. *turns and looks at* ELOISE.)

ELOISE (*she goes to* HILARY). Do you actually propose that I elope with *another man* to your summer place?

HILARY (*calmly*). Why not?

ELOISE (*at loss for words*). But—it's—it's preposterous—and what would everybody say?

HILARY. Nobody will know anything about it. If you are going to elope, you might as well elope there as anywhere else.

(DARRELL *moves to* L.C.)

ELOISE (*protestingly*). But you were going down there to work.

HILARY. Only because I was going to be alone. If there is going to be nobody here, I can work here just as well!

ELOISE (*accusingly*). Ah, ha! So it *was* to avoid me you used to go to Lawrence!

HILARY. Not entirely, but——

DARRELL (*over* L.C. *interrupting. Waving away the idea with a gesture*). No—no. No use of any further discussion. It's awfully good of you to offer your place and we appreciate it. (*He moves to* L.) But we simply couldn't accept it.

HILARY. But I *insist*!

(*He goes to* DARRELL.)

DARRELL. Insist?

HILARY. Yes. After all, a husband has some rights surely!

DARRELL. Really, you know—we are willing to meet you half-way, but——

ELOISE (*interrupting. Emphatically to* DARRELL). No, no, no, no—— (*To* HILARY.) No!!

HILARY (C. *by the trunk*). But I won't take "No" for an answer. You must go to Lawrence at once—and while you are pleasantly billing and cooing, I'll set the legal machinery in motion.

ELOISE (C.R.). You are too anxious!

HILARY. Not at all. I merely want to make the road clear for you. You know you can't marry a second time—until you have disposed of your first husband!

ELOISE. But I insist upon arranging my own divorce!

HILARY. I can't have you mixed up in anything so distasteful. All you have to do is to go quietly down to Lawrence with McKnight and wait there until you are free!

ELOISE. But I *hate* Lawrence!

HILARY. My dear, at a time like this, it doesn't matter so much where you are as who is with you!

DARRELL (*with comic seriousness*). I don't think I care about Lawrence, either!

HILARY. My dear fellow, you'll love the place when you see it!

DARRELL (*doubtingly*). Well, I——

ELOISE (C.R., *interrupting*). It's positively indecent of you, anyway, Hilary, to *want* to choose our destination for us!

DARRELL. Yes, it is. And if you weren't a husband you could see that. So if it's all the same to you, we'll go West as planned!

HILARY (*growing serious*). But it's not all the same to me. (*He moves close to* DARRELL.) I insist that you go down to Lawrence and stay there until the divorce is granted and you can be properly married.

DARRELL. What do you mean?

HILARY. In plain English, I mean that I don't trust you!

DARRELL. What?

HILARY. My wife isn't the first woman you've taken a fancy to, and you've got out of your previous entanglements far too easily. This time I intend to see you do the square thing.

DARRELL (*rather impudently*). Oh, *do* you?

HILARY. Oh, I'm not going to interfere with the elopement—because I'm resigned to the loss of my wife——

ELOISE (*indignantly*). Oh!!!

HILARY. But I intend to see that you marry her and save her reputation.

DARRELL (*defiantly*). Well, suppose I refuse to be bossed by you, what then?

HILARY. You'll either go down to Lawrence to-night as I suggest—or—you'll go straight to—(*he quickly produces the revolver from his pocket*)—where you belong!

(*He covers* DARRELL *with the revolver.*)

ELOISE (*terrified*). Hilary!!

(*She goes quickly to* HILARY *and grabs him by the arm.*)

HILARY (*still facing* DARRELL). Well?

DARRELL. Oh, I don't think you'd shoot me!

HILARY (*grimly, keeping him covered*). That's where you're wrong!

ELOISE (*weakly. She goes to* DARRELL, *in deathly fear of the revolver. As she moves across* HILARY *she turns with arms outstretched to ward off the revolver*). Darry, let us go to Lawrence! After all, it *doesn't* matter where we go—so long as we're together!

DARRELL (*with a glance at the revolver*). Well, of course, if you want to go——

ELOISE (*fearfully*). Yes, I want to.

DARRELL. I'll go. I'll go.

HILARY. Good! (*He puts the revolver back in his pocket.*) But I warn you—if you attempt to bolt, I'll shoot you like a dog.

(*He goes quickly and rings the bell up* R.C.)

(ELOISE *and* DARRELL *go front to* R.C., *watching him as he goes up to the bell button.*)

(HILARY *comes down a little after ringing the bell and calls.*)

Annette!

ANNETTE (*entering* L.1, *cloaked and hatted*). Yes, sir.

HILARY. Take your mistress's bag downstairs—dismiss the taxi that Mr. McKnight came in and wait in my car. You'll find it at the door.

ANNETTE (*crosses in front of the lounge, taking up the case as she passes and goes up to the arch up* R.C.). Yes, sir!

HILARY (*as she reaches the arch to the hall-way*). Oh—Annette—send Thompson to me, please! (*Turns to table above lounge and puts out cigarette on ash-tray.*)

ANNETTE (*as she exits into the hall-way*). Yes, sir.

DARRELL (*well over* R.). Oh Lord!

ELOISE (L. *of* DARRELL). What's the matter? Are you sorry we're going?

DARRELL. No-o, but I don't like your husband butting into my affairs!

ELOISE. But we can be as happy at Lawrence as elsewhere, can't we?

DARRELL. How do I know—I never *saw* the place!

(*He helps her on with her coat.*)

CARTER (*entering from the hall-way*). Did you want me, sir?

HILARY (*up* L.C.). Yes, Carter. Carry Mrs. Farrington's trunk down to the car, please.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He comes down to the trunk and starts to pick it up.* HILARY *helps* CARTER *get the trunk up on his shoulder.* CARTER *carries the trunk out into the hall-way.*)

THOMPSON (*who enters as* CARTER *starts up with the trunk and comes to the* L. *of the arch, his cap in his hand*). Yes, sir.

HILARY (*up* L.C. *above the lounge*). Thompson, I want you to drive Mrs. Farrington and Mr. McKnight and Annette down to the bungalow at Lawrence. Drive carefully—don't speed—(*he gives* THOMPSON *a significant look*)—don't speed—(THOMPSON *nods understandingly*)—and don't under any circumstances—alter your destination—— Do you understand?

THOMPSON. Yes, sir.

HILARY. Good! That's all.

THOMPSON. Yes, sir.

(*He turns and exits into the hall-way, putting on his cap.*)

HILARY (*moving down to* C. *and offering* ELOISE *his hand*). Good-bye——

(ELOISE *goes slowly to* HILARY *and takes his hand.*)

And good luck!

ELOISE (*wistfully*). Don't you—want to—kiss me—for the last time?

HILARY (*politely to* DARRELL). If Mr. McKnight has no objection.

DARRELL (*angrily*). Oh, go to the devil!

(*He moves up* R. *of the table to the arch up* R.C.)

HILARY (*refusing her lips and kissing her lightly on the brow*). All the luck in the world, my dear.

ELOISE (*tearfully*). Thank you, Hilary. The same to you, Hilary—always.

(DARRELL *reaches out his hand to her and draws her up to the arch. She turns to* HILARY.)

Good-bye.

HILARY (*gently*). Good night.

(ELOISE *with a long last look around; bursts into tears and exits almost reluctantly with* DARRELL.)

HILARY (*stands motionless until the outside door slams and then moves quickly to the push button up* L. *of the arch and rings for* CARTER. *He rushes down to the 'phone on the table and picks up the receiver*). Hello—get me Mrs. Gail at the Biltmore. Gail. G-A-I-L. Yes, she's stopping there. I don't know the number. Call me when you get her. (*Hangs up the receiver and puts down the 'phone. Sits in the arm-chair* L. *of the table and, taking a telegram blank, writes feverishly.*)

CARTER (*enters from the hall-way and comes down to* C. *above the table*). Yes, sir?

HILARY (*busy writing telegram*). Oh, Carter—I'm going on a trip. Get your hat and coat.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

HILARY. I want you to come with me. We'll jump into the runabout at the garage, stop at the telegraph office and send this wire to Bishop Kennelly.

(*He rises, folding the telegram and placing it in his pocket.*)

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He exits into the hall-way.*)

HILARY (*taking up the 'phone*). Hello—That you, Nora? This is Hilary speaking. Yes. They've gone to Lawrence. Yes. He

behaved exactly as you said he would. I'm leaving now. What? Mind, I depend on you! You won't fail me? Good-bye.

(*He hangs up the receiver and puts down the 'phone.*)

Carter (*enters from the hall-way wearing his overcoat and carrying his hat. He comes down to the arm-chair* L. *of the table and takes up* Hilary's *overcoat. As he enters.*) I'm ready, sir.

Hilary (*slipping into the overcoat which* Carter *holds for him*). Good! You're not afraid to drive with me, are you, Carter?

Carter (*helping* Hilary *on with his overcoat*). Oh no, sir. Not at all, sir.

Hilary (*as he steps quickly to above the table and takes up his hat and the manuscript case*). Because you're going faster to-night than you've ever gone before!

Carter. Where to, sir?

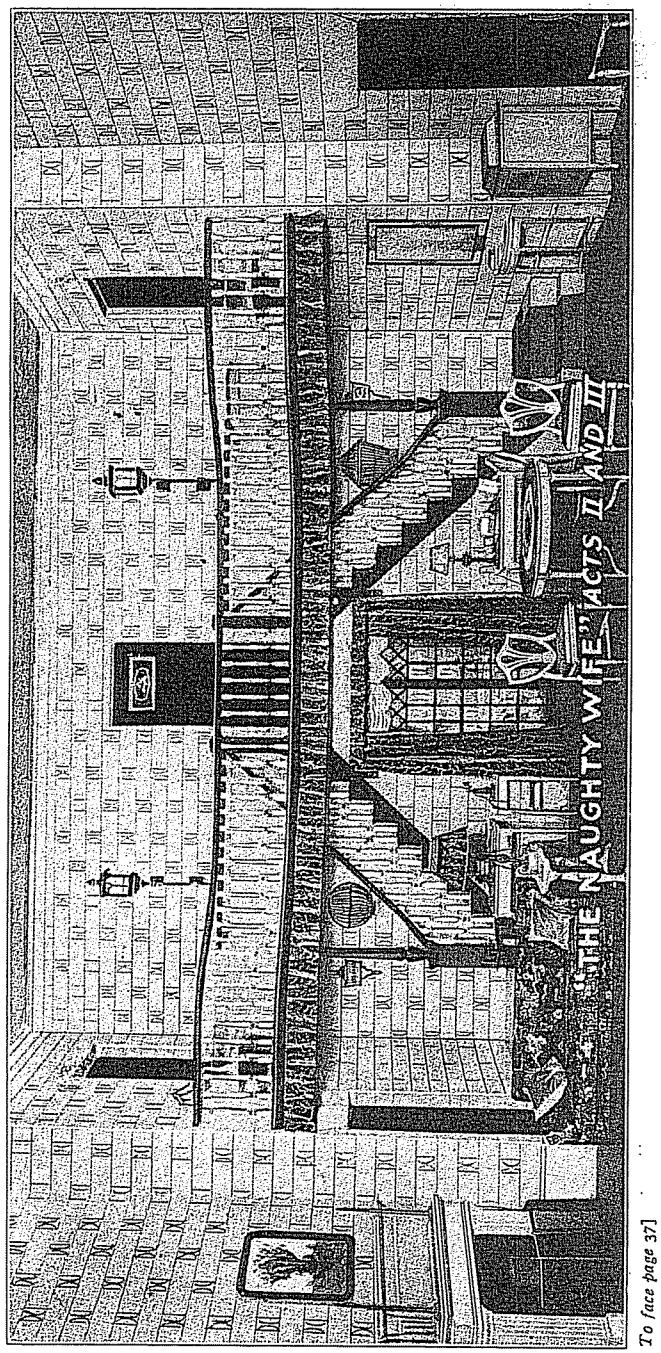
Hilary. To Lawrence—and we must make it in record time.

Carter (*astonished*). To Lawrence, sir?

Hilary. Yes, I'm giving a small house party at the bungalow! Come on!

(*He dashes out into the hall-way, followed by* Carter, *as the* Curtain *falls.*

Average Time of Act.—37 *minutes.*



To face page 37

ACT II

SCENE.—*Living-room of the Farringtons' bungalow on Long Island, an interior indicating the good taste of the owner. A railed balcony runs along the rear of the scene which from three doors open off in bedrooms. The room usually occupied by* ELOISE *is* C. *on the balcony, with guest rooms at either end. Stairways beginning up* R. *and up* L. *lead up to the balcony, almost meeting at the small landing in front of* ELOISE'S *door. At up* C. *under the balcony French doors opening on stage lead out into the garden. There is a doorway at* L.1 *leading into* HILARY'S *bedroom. At* R.1 *there is a fireplace and mantel, and above this at* R.2 *a doorway leads into the kitchen. The furniture is arranged as follows: Below the door* L.1, *a side chair; above this door, a Vocalion; at the foot of the* L. *stairway and set against the* L. *wall is a small console table with several books and magazines. Up* L. *of the low* C. *arch and under the balcony is a writing-desk and chair. The desk is completely furnished with desk blotter, stationery, pens, ink-well, matchstand and matches and a desk lamp, and a photograph of* HILARY *in a silver frame. Hanging from under the balcony, and a little to the* L. *of the writing-desk is a wicker bird-cage. At the* R. *of the* C. *arch is a small square table on which is a desk telephone, with a suburban telephone book on the shelf underneath. Just at the* R. *of this small table is an oblong library table on which are several nicely bound books, a checker board and box containing checkers, several decks of playing cards, and a matchstand with matches. At the foot of the stairway* R. *is a small stand with a smoking-set, the receptacles containing cigars, cigarettes and matches. Hanging from underneath the balcony, a little to the* R. *of the oblong table is another bird-cage. At the fireplace down* R. *there is a fire-log, black iron fire-dogs and a black fire-screen. On the mantelpiece are two tall brass candlesticks with red candles. Over the mantel hangs a painting in a bright red frame. Set a little out from the fireplace and facing the footlights is a large over-stuffed settee or couch with two large sofa pillows. At the* L. *end of this couch is a small "kidney" table on which are a table lamp, silver cigarette box containing cigarettes, a matchstand with matches and a book or two. A little to the* L. *of* C. *is a round table with a blue silk doyly on it. Side chairs* R. *and* L. *of this table. Up on the balcony at either end are arm-chairs placed below the end doors. Above the up* L. *door against*

the back wall is a small console table. Above the up R. *door is a small round table. At* R. *and* L. *of the* C. *door on the balcony, centred on the back wall, are two wall lamps. Underneath the balcony, on the wall at the foot of the stairways* R. *and* L., *are two wall esconcers. These lamps are practical and are controlled by a brass plate wall switch which is just above the door* L.1. *A valance of bright-coloured cretonne borders the front edge of the balcony and side curtains and valance of the same material are hung at the small arch up* C. *White silk French blinds hang at the French glass doors up* C. *Carpeting of a warm neutral tint covers the floor, the stairways and the balcony floor.*

TIME.—*About two hours later the same night.*

LIGHTS.—*The* CURTAIN *rises on a dark stage : except for the blue night-light seen outside the French doors up* C.

AT RISE.—*As the* CURTAIN *rises a motor is heard approaching from a distance and as the* CURTAIN *is well up, two little beams of light from the motor headlights appear on the backing up* C. *gradually growing larger as the noise of the motor increases. The floods of light swing down into the room as though the car had circled around a circular drive way and the motor stops. There is the sound of footsteps outside on the porch and the key is heard to turn in the lock. The French doors are thrown open and* HILARY *enters : carrying his manuscript case and a pocket flashlight which he turns this way and that about the room. He is closely followed by* CARTER, *who carries the bags and several wrapped parcels.*

(*After flashing the flashlight around,* HILARY *comes directly down to the table lamp on the "kidney" table at the* L. *end of the couch and turns on the lamp.*)

HILARY (*after he turns on the lamp*). Looks as if we're first, doesn't it ? (*Crosses to* R. *and opens pantry door, looks into room, then closes door.*)

CARTER (*placing the bags on the floor* L. *of the table* C. *and the parcels on the chair* L. *of the table*). Yes, sir. We ought to be first at the rate you was driving.

HILARY (*coming down* R. *end of couch and glancing at the fireplace. Putting the flashlight in the side pocket of his overcoat and glancing about the room*). You weren't frightened were you, Carter ?

CARTER (L. *of the table*). No, sir. Nothing frightens me, sir.

HILARY (*shivering*). B'rrr ! By George, it's cold in here. (*He crosses front to* L.) It's warmer outside than in.

CARTER (*crosses above the table up* R.C.). The house has been shut up too long, sir.

HILARY (*moving to the wall switch above the door*). You'd better light the fire.

(*On the word "Fire" he presses the switch. Lights go full up and the motor headlights dim slowly out.* HILARY *places his manuscript case on the Vocalion above the door* L.1.)

CARTER (*taking a matchstand from the upper end of the "kidney" table as he goes to the fireplace*). It's all prepared, sir. Shall I put a match to it ?

HILARY (*over* L. *Glancing around the room*). Yes, do.

CARTER (*at the fireplace*). Yes, sir.

(*He strikes a match and holds it to the fire-logs, reaching in above the fire-screen.*)

HILARY (*going above the table and looking out the* C. *doors*). I wonder if they're in sight yet ? (*Coming back down to* L. *of the table.*) No. No sign of them. We've got time enough. What was it Nora told me to do ? (*A slight pause while he looks about to see what can be done to make the place more cheerful.*) I know, make the place as bright as possible. Are there any flowers in the greenhouse ?

CARTER (*placing the matchstand back on the "kidney" table*). Any quantity of them, sir.

HILARY. Let's have some in—bright colours, anything——

(CARTER *moves up to the* C. *doors.*)

decent you can find.

(CARTER *stops at up* C. HILARY *crosses in front of table toward the fireplace* R.)

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He goes out through the* C. *doors and off* L. *into the garden.*)

(HILARY *warms his hands at the fire for an instant and then turns to* C. *whistling a few bars of "There's a little bit of bad in every good little girl." He pauses at* C.R. *and turning his back to the audience, he assigns the bedrooms to his prospective guests in pantomime, beginning with the room up* R. *on the balcony and thence along the balcony till his eye rests on the door of his own room at* L.1. *He starts to whistle again and goes quickly to the door* L.1. *Opens the door and reaching in, turns a light switch and the room* L.1 *is flooded with light. He crosses to the* L. *of the table and taking up his bags, he carries them off into the room* L.1.)

(CARTER *enters* C. *from off* L. *with his arm full of flowers as* HILARY *goes into the bedroom with the bags. He comes down to the* C. *table and places the flowers on the table.* HILARY *enters from room* L.1, *closing the door.*)

(*As he places the flowers on the table*). Will these do, sir ?

HILARY. Splendid ! (*Starting to arrange them.*) Get me something to put them in.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He crosses* R. *and exits into the pantry* R.2.)

(*Above the table* C. HILARY *is arranging the flowers.*)

(*Enters from the pantry* R. *with one low flower bowl and two tall vases which he brings to the table*). All I could find, sir.

HILARY. They'll do. (*Fills one tall vase with flowers.*) There we are. Put that on the mantelpiece.

(CARTER *carries the vase to the fireplace* R. *and places it on the centre of the mantel,* HILARY *placing the short-stemmed flowers in the sand in the low bowl.*)

Nothing like flowers to brighten up a room, eh, Carter?

CARTER (*at the fireplace, giving a final touch to the flowers*). No, sir.

HILARY (*moving the low bowl to the* L. *side of the table to make room for* CARTER). Come along now. You do the other yourself. (*Continues working over the low bowl.*)

CARTER. Yes, sir. (*He comes to the table and taking a handful of flowers and a vase, goes to the table up* R.C. *and fills the vase as he speaks*). *I'm* rather good at arranging flowers, sir. Cook is always complimenting me on my taste at it.

HILARY (*still working with the low bowl*). Is she? I had no idea that cook was such a connoisseur.

CARTER. Oh, yes, sir. She always has a bunch or two in the kitchen to give her inspiration.

HILARY. Inspiration, eh? (*He takes off his overcoat as he steps back to admire his handiwork. He steps up stage and throws his overcoat over the balustrade of the* L. *stairway and places his hat on the writing-desk. As he puts down his hat, he notices his photograph on the desk. He picks it up and glances at it admiringly, dusts it off with the sleeve of his sack coat and bringing it down stage, he places it on the* L. *front side of the table* C. *He laughs softly to himself.*) I'll just put this here. It will make them both feel thoroughly happy and comfortable. (L. *of the table* C.) The next thing is to see what can be done in the way of some supper before they get here.

CARTER (*coming down and gathering up the remaining flowers from the table* C.). Shall I put these upstairs in your room, sir?

HILARY. No. I'm going to sleep down here to-night. (*Indicates the room* L.1.)

CARTER. Are you, sir?

HILARY. Take them into the kitchen. They may give you inspiration.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(CARTER *exits into the pantry* R. *with the flowers and small brown bag.*)

(*The sound of the motor is heard again and the headlights appear as in the beginning of the act swinging down into the room.* HILARY *listens to the sound of the motor, smiles joyfully and grabbing up the parcels from the chair* L. *of the table, runs off into the pantry* R. *The motor stops, and after a pause* DARRELL *and* ELOISE *enter* C. *from off* R.

They are dressed as last seen in Act I. ELOISE *has a handkerchief to her eyes as though she had been crying.*)

DARRELL (*looks about in astonishment as he enters*). Hello!—There must be servants here.

(*He comes down* R.C.)

ELOISE (*coming down to front of the chair* R. *of the table*). He probably telephoned when he thought he was coming himself.

DARRELL (*above* L. *end of the couch* R.). Jolly thoughtful of him, I call it. (*He sees the fire and goes to it.*) Ah! We can stand a fire on a night like this. (*Warming his hands at the fire.*) I hope there's some food in the place.

ELOISE (*front of chair* R. *of the table*). Annette will find something for us.

DARRELL (*warming his hands again*). This isn't half bad. (*Turns his back to the fire.*) Especially with everything prepared like this.

ELOISE (*with a slight show of spirit*). Well, he owed us some consideration after forcing us to come here.

DARRELL (*taking off his overcoat*). Well, after all I think he was right. It would have been beastly on a train, and this strikes me as being almost an ideal spot for a honeymoon.

ELOISE (*front of chair* R. *of table. With vexation.*) Oh——!

DARRELL. What's the matter?

ELOISE. When I think of the awful things he said to me, I could almost cry.

DARRELL (R. *front of couch*). Please don't. You've been crying ever since we left town.

ELOISE. Well, I can't help it. He said it was only my clothes that made me attractive.

DARRELL. Nonsense. You'd be just as attractive without them —— (*Throws overcoat and cap down on* R. *end of couch.*)

ELOISE (*quickly*). What?

DARRELL (*turning quickly*). I mean—you'd be attractive in anything. (*He goes to her.*) You're the most wonderful woman in the world.

ELOISE. Well, it makes me just furious to think that I didn't answer him properly. I never do think of the right thing to say until it's too late. (*Unbuttoning her coat.*)

DARRELL (*soothingly as he pets her a little and starts to take off her coat*). There, there, dear—don't think of him any more. He's passed out of our lives for ever. Now take off your coat and settle down in our little love nest.

(*He hangs her coat over the back of the chair* R. *of the table.*)

ELOISE (*sits in chair* R. *of table*). You're so comforting, Darry. I don't know what I'd do without you—— (*Suddenly.*) If you ever deserted me——!

DARRELL. Desert you! (*Kneels at her side.*) Why, sweetheart—a whole lifetime would be too short to prove such a love as mine.

ELOISE. And you do love me—don't you?

DARRELL (*matter-of-factly*). You bet your life, I do.

ELOISE. You don't think I'm an empty-headed little doll, do you?

DARRELL. Empty headed? Is that what he called my brainy little girl?

ELOISE. Yes, he said I was a tyrant, I tried to make a slave of everybody——

(*She turns to face* L.)

DARRELL. What do you care *what* he said? Remember, you're never going to see him again. There will be nobody in the world but just YOU and *me*.

ELOISE (*turning to* DARRELL). You're so good to me, Darry!

DARRELL. I wish I could carry you off to some desert island where we could be alone for ever and ever.

ELOISE (*entranced, looking front*). Oh, that would be too wonderful. (*Turning and placing her arm about him.*) Darry!

DARRELL (*throwing his arms around her*). My precious!

(*He is about to kiss her as* ANNETTE *enters up* C. *from off* R., *carrying the bags.*)

ANNETTE (*sternly, as she enters and takes in the situation*). Which room, ma'am?

(*At the sound of her voice,* DARRELL *and* ELOISE *rise in confusion.*)

(DARRELL *moves away to front of* L. *end of couch.*)

ELOISE (*as* DARRELL *releases her, she steps to the front of table. Embarrassed*). My usual room.

ANNETTE (*with a disapproving glance at* DARRELL). Yes, ma'am.

(*She goes to the* L. *stairway and goes up the stairs, keeping her eyes on* DARRELL. DARRELL *fidgets uncomfortably under her stare. When she reaches the door* C. *on the balcony, she gives her head a haughty toss and exits.*)

DARRELL (*moves uncomfortably farther away to* R. *under the influence of* ANNETTE'S *disapproving stare. As* ANNETTE *exits*). I don't like that girl.

ELOISE (*with a cry as she discovers* HILARY'S *photograph on the table*). Oh! (*She reaches and takes up the photograph.*) O—h!

DARRELL (*moving toward her from over* R.). What's the matter now?

ELOISE (*holding the photo at arm's length in front of her and looking at it*). Every time I think of Hilary I can't help thinking of the awful things he said to me.

DARRELL (*taking the photo from her*). I think it's about time you were forgetting him and thinking a little of me.

(*He crosses up* R.C. *and places the photo on the table up* R.C.)

ELOISE (*in front of table*). It's all very well to *say* that, but it isn't so easy to *do*. (*She moves* R. *to front of the couch.*) Especially here where everything reminds me of him.

DARRELL (*up* R.C.). Why should everything remind you of him?

ELOISE. *We* spent *our* honeymoon here, too.

DARRELL (*coming down* R.C.). What!!

ELOISE. Only then it was June, and the roses were in bloom.

(*She sinks on the couch* R.)

DARRELL (*he crosses to* C.L.). Well, I'm damned!

ELOISE (*sharply*). Darrell!

DARRELL (*turns to her at* C.L.). Why didn't you tell me that before we agreed to come here?

ELOISE (*on the couch* R.). I didn't want Hilary to think it made any difference. But now that I see all these familiar things——

(*She begins to cry again.*)

DARRELL (*he goes to* R.C.). Now please don't cry. (*Leaning over the "kidney" table at* L. *end of the couch.*) Crying doesn't help matters and it doesn't add to anyone's happiness, so please stop it.

(ANNETTE *enters from the room up* C. *on the balcony and comes down the* L. *stairway, quietly taking in the situation.*)

ELOISE. I don't see how you can speak to me like that. With all his faults *he* never did.

DARRELL. Well, you ran away from *him*.

(ELOISE *bursts into tears again.*)

Oh, damn!!

(*He moves* C.)

ANNETTE (*down* L. *To* DARRELL). She's cold and tired, sir. That's all that's wrong. Perhaps a drop of something hot or a bite to eat might fetch her round. I'll see if I can find something in the pantry.

(*She starts up* L.C. DARRELL *crosses* L.)

(*As* ANNETTE *says "or a bite to eat"* HILARY *enters from the pantry* R. *carrying a large tray upon which is a chafing dish with alcohol burner blazing, a decanter of wine, two wine-glasses, two plates, two bouillon cups with bouillon, serviettes, knives and forks and spoons, and large ebony-handled serving fork and spoon.*)

HILARY (*not waiting for* ANNETTE *to finish her line*). Precisely what I was thinking myself.

ELOISE (*rising quickly in surprise*). Hilary!

HILARY. Something hot and tasty.

(*He moves to above the table* C.)

(ANNETTE *takes the low bowl of flowers from the table* C. *and places it on the console table up* L. *at the foot of the stairs.*)

DARRELL. How the devil——

HILARY. Behold! Supper. (*He puts the tray down on the table.*) Hot soup! Eggs Mornay and a little wine.

DARRELL (L.). Well—we just needed you to make our happiness complete.

HILARY (*innocently*). I hope I'm not de trop? (*Placing bouillon cups and plates* R. *and* L. *on table.*)

DARRELL (*sarcastically*). Oh, no—not at all. We were just wishing you'd come.

ELOISE (*puzzled, moves slowly to the chair* R. *of the table*). How did you get here ahead of us?

HILARY (C. *above the table*). Well, you see, my dear, after you'd gone, it suddenly occurred to me that you might find the place damp, cold and uninviting and as you really came here at my suggestion—well, I simply couldn't have that happen, could I?

DARRELL (L.). No, you couldn't.

HILARY (*placing the serviettes at* R. *and* L. *of the table*). So I jumped into the runabout—took the shortest cut and got here in time to put the place in order for you.

DARRELL (*sarcastically*). Very kind of you, I'm sure.

HILARY. Don't mention it.

DARRELL. In fact, kind isn't the word.

HILARY. To tell the truth I wasn't thinking so much about you, I was thinking more about my wife. I didn't want her to feel uncomfortable.

ELOISE (R. *of table* C.). It was most considerate, Hilary, and I know you meant well—but, it's rather awkward—don't you think?

HILARY. My being here, you mean? Oh, don't let that bother you. I shall be leaving almost immediately. (*He turns to* ANNETTE.) Annette, will you ask Thompson to fill my petrol tank for me?

(ANNETTE *nods and exits up* C. *and off to* R.)

(*To* DARRELL). It leaked coming out. (*To* ELOISE.) Now, my dear, sit down and have a little hot soup.

ELOISE. No, thanks—I'm not hungry.

HILARY (*trying to coax her to sit*). It will warm you up after your cold ride.

ELOISE (*reluctantly*). No—o, thanks.

HILARY (*starting to put her down in the chair*). Just a little!

ELOISE (*hungry, but feeling forced to decline*). But I'm not hungry. Really I'm not!

HILARY (*seating her*). It's really not bad at all. I made it myself. (*Inviting* DARRELL.) McKnight?

DARRELL (*emphatically*). No thanks. (*He pulls the chair* L. *of the table away from the table.*) I'm warm enough.

(*He sits.*)

HILARY (*persuasively*). Just a taste? (*Taking up the decanter and filling a glass.*) Well, a glass of this very excellent white wine. I can recommend it for honeymoon occasions. (*Places decanter back on tray.*) It will make you see things—(*he looks at* DARRELL. DARRELL *glares at him*)—in a more romantic light. (*He places the glass of wine in* ELOISE'S *hand.*)

ELOISE (*smiling up at* HILARY). Thank you, Hilary, I am thirsty—and I remember how very delicious this is. (*To* DARRELL.) We had it on *our* honeymoon.

(*She drinks the wine.*)

DARRELL (*sarcastically*). Oh, did you?

HILARY (*taking the bouillon cup from off the plate in front of* DARRELL *and placing it back on the tray*). We did, indeed. (*Removing the lid from the chafing dish.*) And now for the pièce de résistance. Eggs Mornay! (*Removes the bouillon cup from* ELOISE'S *plate and places it on the tray.*)

(ELOISE *turns hungrily to the table, moving her chair close in anticipation.*)

HILARY (*to* ELOISE). You always did like Eggs Mornay.

ELOISE (*holding her plate, eager to be served*). Did I?

HILARY. Yes. Don't you remember the night you tried to make it yourself?

ELOISE. Yes, and I dropped it all over the table!

(*They both laugh merrily.*)

(DARRELL *laughs sarcastically to call their attention to the fact that he is still one of the party.*)

HILARY (*after a slight awkward pause*). And that's another thing you'll have to learn, McKnight, to make Eggs Mornay. I'll give you the recipe—— (*He helps* ELOISE *to a liberal portion of the Eggs Mornay and prepares to serve* DARRELL.) Hold your plate, McKnight.

DARRELL (*reaching over and snatching his plate from the table*). You leave my plate alone!

HILARY (*referring to* DARRELL'S *plate*). Not over there—over here.

DARRELL. I don't want any!

HILARY. Well, is there anything else I can do to make you happy and comfortable?

(*He turns out the light under the chafing dish.*)

DARRELL. Don't tell *me* you've run out of *cheery little suggestions*.

HILARY (*pretending to apologize*). You see, my position is so new. I was afraid I might seem remiss.

DARRELL. On the contrary. (*Bow to each other.*)

HILARY. Well, if you're quite sure you're not hungry—perhaps you'll let me take your place.

DARRELL. What?

HILARY. Only so far as the food is concerned. You see, I've been so busy getting things prepared for you that I've had no time to think of myself. And I'm beginning to feel the need of something.

ELOISE (*in chair* R. *of table*). Of course, how stupid of us—you must be hungry too.

HILARY. I am—although I hadn't thought of it before. And it's rather a long way down to the village.

DARRELL. Why not wait until you get to the village?

ELOISE (*reprovingly*). Don't be so selfish, Darry. We can't turn a starving man out of his own house—even if he is my husband.

HILARY. Thank you, my dear. (*Stepping to* DARRELL.) If you don't mind, McKnight. (*Takes hold of the back of* DARRELL'S *chair, urging him out.*)

DARRELL (*rising reluctantly and stepping to above the table*). Oh—well——

HILARY. Thanks. (*Seating himself in the chair he has practically forced* DARRELL *to vacate.*) It seems like old times to be sitting here with a chafing dish between us. (*Proceeds to help himself to the Eggs Mornay.*)

DARRELL (*sarcastically*). Oh, does it?

HILARY. Yes, you don't know what you're missing, old man.

DARRELL. I could miss a lot of things without feeling sorry.

ELOISE (*pausing from eating*). Oh——! I miss something, too.

HILARY. What?

ELOISE. The paprika—you've forgotten it.

DARRELL. Paprika?

ELOISE. Yes—I knew it didn't taste the same, but I couldn't think *what* was missing until now.

HILARY (*stops eating*). Fancy my forgetting a thing like that on an occasion like this! I'll get it immediately.

(*He starts to rise.*)

ELOISE (*quickly stopping him*). No, no, stay where you are. Let Darry get it—he's up.

(HILARY *sits again.*)

DARRELL (*indignantly*). What?

HILARY. Why not? The least you can do is to provide the spice.

ELOISE. Besides, Hilary is our *guest*—in a sort of way.

HILARY. Exactly—get the paprika, old man.

DARRELL. How do I know where the damned old paprika is?

HILARY. You'll find it in the pantry—on the second shelf.

ELOISE. You may as well get used to the place, Darry, if we're to stay here.

DARRELL (*after an indignant look at them*). Oh, Hell——!

(*He goes toward the pantry door,* R.)

(HILARY *sniggers.* DARRELL *stops at the pantry door* R.)

What *shelf* did you say it was on?

HILARY. The second shelf, old man. You can't miss it. It looks like red pepper.

DARRELL (*silencing him with a wave of his hand*). Oh, I know what it looks like!

(*He exits into pantry* R.)

HILARY (*to* ELOISE). I'm sorry to put him to all this trouble, my dear, but I was in such a hurry to have things ready for you——

ELOISE (*interrupting*). Oh, don't apologize—(*a quick glance toward the pantry. Joyously*)—because you didn't really forget the paprika at all.

HILARY. What?

ELOISE. No—you didn't forget a thing. It's beautifully seasoned. I just made that up to get rid of Darry for a minute.

HILARY. Oh, I see.

ELOISE. I wanted to talk with you alone before you left. You see, he doesn't understand you as I do.

HILARY. Naturally.

ELOISE. Of course, *I* know why you came and how sweet and thoughtful you've been, but it's not the way husbands usually act in a situation like this, is it?

HILARY. No, I suppose not.

ELOISE. So you mustn't mind if he seems upset about having you here.

HILARY. Upset? Why should he be upset? I've done everything possible to make him feel comfortable.

ELOISE. I know you have—but he's not so used to having you around as I am.

HILARY. You mean to say he's getting jealous of me?

ELOISE. Well—I'm afraid so.

HILARY. Oh, that's absurd.

ELOISE (*spiritedly*). It may seem absurd to you that anyone should feel jealous of me, but Darry has a very affectionate nature

and feels this sort of thing very keenly. He's very sensitive, you know.

Hilary. Why, I wouldn't hurt his sensitive soul for the world. What do you want me to do?

Eloise. I want you both to be friends.

Hilary. What?

Eloise (*pleadingly*). I want you to be his friend as well as mine. It will make it so much nicer for all of us, and after the first strain of things has worn off we can visit each other just as if nothing had happened.

Hilary (*joyously*). That's a splendid idea!

Eloise. Oh, thank you, Hilary!

Hilary. Not at all.

Eloise. I knew you'd see it in the right way. (*Starts eating again as though through with the subject.*)

Hilary. It'll give me something to do during the long winter evenings—I'll run in on you for dinner at the flat or wherever you're going to live—stretch myself out before the fire—listen to McKnight's complaints—and brood over what I've escaped.

(*He turns in his chair to face front.*)

Eloise (*letting her fork drop on her plate*). What?

Hilary. My dear——. (*Rising quickly, reaching forward and taking her hand across the table.*) I accept your invitation with thanks.

(*He sits again as* Darrell *enters.*)

Darrell (*enters from the pantry* R. *with the paprika; speaking as he enters*). That's the messiest pantry I ever saw. (*He goes to above the table as he speaks. Offering paprika to* Eloise.) Here's the paprika.

Eloise. Thank you, Darry. (*Uses serviette on her lips.*) I don't need it now.

Hilary. You were so long about getting it that we've nearly finished.

Darrell. Yes, finished *me*, I suppose.

Hilary. We did mention you. In fact, Eloise made a brilliant suggestion.

Darrell. What was it?

Hilary. Well, we've decided that as soon as you're settled permanently in a flat or home of some sort—I'm to drop in for some cheery, chummy evenings. Sort of family revival meetings.

Darrell (*clasping his hands together in front of him*). Well, won't—that—be—lovely!

Eloise. Darry!

Darrell (*to* Hilary). What do you take me for?

Hilary. For better or worse—it was her suggestion, not mine.

Eloise. Why, Darry, the *least* we can do is to invite him up for dinner occasionally.

Darrell (*sarcastically*). Yes, and send me out for the paprika while you two enjoy yourselves. But you don't put anything like that over on me.

Eloise (*angrily*). What a perfectly *horrid* thing to say!

Darrell. And when I come back with the damned stuff—you say you don't need it! (*Slams the paprika down on the table. Sneeze bus.*)

Eloise (*rises quickly*). Darrell!

Hilary (*rises. Trying to pacify them*). Come, come, children, you mustn't quarrel before strangers. (*They look at him.*) It's so embarrassing—to the stranger! (*After a short pause.*) Well, if there's nothing *more* I can do for you—I'll be trotting along if you'll excuse me.

(*He moves to the newel post up* L. *and takes his hat and coat.* Eloise *sits again.*)

Darrell (*sarcastically*). Don't speed, will you? (*Sits in the chair* L. *of the table.*)

Hilary (*as he goes to the* C. *doors with his hat and coat*). I'll try to keep within the traffic laws. (*He turns at the doors.*) Au revoir, Eloise. So long, McKnight.

(*He exits* C. *to* R.)

Darrell. Good-*bye*! (*He moves his chair close to the table, muttering to himself.*) Wouldn't you think he'd know enough to keep away at a time like this? (*Lifts the cover off the chafing dish as though about to help himself to the contents.*)

Hilary (*re-enters quickly from off up* R.). Oh——!

Darrell (*drops the cover with a bang and shoves his chair away from the table disgustedly*). Good God!!

Hilary (*coming down*). It suddenly occurred to me that if there is anything else I can do to contribute to your comfort, you have only to telephone me.

Darrell. There is just one thing you can do if you want to please *me*.

Hilary. Yes, I know, old man, I'm sorry, but I really can't stay.

(*He turns up to the* C. *doors.*)

Annette (*enters* C. *from off* R. *and comes to* R. *of* Hilary). If you please, sir.

Hilary. Well?

Annette. Thompson says there is no petrol in the place and none in either car.

Hilary. No petrol?

Darrell. There was plenty in *our* car.

Annette (*to* Darrell). No, sir. Thompson says it's all gone.

(DARRELL *rises and turns* L., *disgusted.*)

HILARY. Surely he must have enough to get me back to town?

ANNETTE. No, sir. He says he found a hole in the tank and it's all leaked out.

HILARY (*to* DARRELL). Now—isn't that too bad?

DARRELL (*down* L.). And why should there be a leak in your tank at this particular time?

HILARY (*up* L. *of* C.). Why? Ah—that's just it—why?—— Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good. After all, I don't see why I can't work down here to-night just as well as I could in town. (*Puts down hat and overcoat at newel post up* L.)

ELOISE (*rises, gasping*). You mean—you are not going?

HILARY (*surprised*). How can I?

DARRELL (*down* L.). Do you mean to say that you are going to stay here with us?

HILARY (*calmly*). What else can I do? I promise to leave you to your own devices.

DARRELL (*as he crosses over to couch* R. *To* ANNETTE, *who is up* R.C.). Annette, get our bags—we're not going to stay after all. (*Takes up his hat and coat from the couch.*)

(ELOISE *steps above the chair and takes her coat from the back of the chair.*)

(ANNETTE *goes to the stairway and starts up.*)

HILARY (*coming down* L. *of the table*). Nonsense!!

(ANNETTE *stops on the first landing and waits further orders.*)

Of course you're going to stay!

DARRELL. I think not. (*Angrily, losing patience.*) I've had enough of your confounded interference and dictation!

(*He confronts* HILARY.)

HILARY (*suavely*). I'm sorry if I annoy you, but I am still Mrs. Farrington's *legal* guardian, though I *have* waived my claims as her husband, and I feel it my duty to protect her interests. That's why I want you to remain under my roof.

DARRELL (C.L.). I absolutely decline to consider it!

ELOISE (R.C. *ashamed—advancing toward them a few steps*). It was bad enough to be here alone together. But with you *also* here —— Really!

(*She halts, at loss for words and moves* R. *to front of couch.*)

HILARY. But you can ignore me. Forget that I exist.

DARRELL. Impossible!

HILARY. Then what are you going to do?

DARRELL. We're going to leave here at once. (*He moves to up* R.C.) Come, Eloise!—Annette! Get our bags!

(ANNETTE *goes up the stairway* R. *and exits into the* C. *room on the balcony.*)

HILARY (L. *of the table*). How are you going to do it? Both cars are out of commission!

DARRELL. Perhaps I can do something about that. I know quite a lot about cars.

HILARY. It isn't a question of mechanism. It's a question of lack of petrol.

DARRELL (*above the chair* R. *of the table*). Oh, very well! We'll do without the cars, then. We'll walk!

ELOISE (*over* R. *Startled*). Walk?

HILARY. The nearest village is six miles through the woods—and the roads are not lighted.

DARRELL (*smiling confidently*). Oh, we'll find our way.

ELOISE (*protesting*). But Darrell! Six miles! At this time of night?

DARRELL (*going to* ELOISE). Well, we can't stay here now, with your husband here, can we?

ELOISE (*going in front of* DARRELL *and up to the* C. *doors*). I'd rather stay here—than go into those woods! (*She shivers.*) Just look out! (*She looks off* R. *through the open doors.*) There's not a light anywhere! And the moon doesn't reach among the trees!

HILARY (L. *to* R. *of the table*). To say nothing of snakes and mosquitoes!

DARRELL. Mosquitoes? At this time of year?

HILARY. Yes, that's the kind we have here, old man.

ELOISE (*coming down toward* DARRELL, *seeking protection*). Darrell?

DARRELL (*groping—then inspired*). I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll *telephone* to the liveryman in the village for a cab of some sort. (*Throws down his cap and coat on* R. *end of couch.*)

HILARY. Ah! That's a good idea. That's a brain wave.

(*He sits* L. *of the table.*)

(DARRELL *moves up* R. *of couch to the 'phone on small table up* R.C *He picks up the 'phone and takes off the receiver.*)

ELOISE (*as* DARRELL *moves up to the 'phone, takes off her coat and drops it on the* L. *end of the couch. Takes off her hat and places it on the "kidney" table*). He won't be there at this time of night.

(*She sits on the couch* R.)

DARRELL. We'll try him! (*In the 'phone.*) Hello! Hello! Hello! (*To* HILARY.) What's the number?

HILARY. Oh, just ask for the livery stable.

DARRELL (*in the 'phone*). Give me the livery stable—Johnson? . . . . I don't care what his name is! . . . . Yes, get him for me, will you please! (*To* HILARY.) Oh, we'll get him out, all right——

(*Quickly into 'phone.*) Hello—what? Doesn't answer?—well, try him again.

ELOISE (*on couch* R.). It's no use, I tell you! He's never there at this time of night. We tried him several times when we were on our honeymoon. D'you remember the night we . . .

(*She looks across at* HILARY. HILARY *laughs in pleasant recollection. She laughs. They feel* DARRELL *glaring at them and suddenly stop.*)

DARRELL (*glaring at them. In the 'phone*). What? All right! Never mind!

(*He hangs up the receiver and comes down to the chair* R. *of the table.*)

(ANNETTE *enters from the* C. *room on the balcony and comes down the* L. *stairway to* L. *of* HILARY. *She carries the bags. Wears hat and coat.*)

ELOISE. I'm afraid there's no help for it, Darry.

DARRELL (*resignedly. To* ELOISE). Oh, very well—I suppose we'll have to stand him then. (*To* HILARY.) But we'll leave here the very first thing in the morning. Mind that!

HILARY (*shrugging his shoulders indifferently*). Just as you like!

ANNETTE (L. *of* HILARY). I have the bags, sir.

HILARY (*hospitably to* ANNETTE). Our guests have changed their minds and they will stay the night after all, Annette. So carry them up again.

ANNETTE (*wearily*). Yes, sir.

(*Goes up the* L. *stairway with the bags.* ELOISE *rises, flounces down* R. *and returns to* R.C. *again, sees* ANNETTE.)

ELOISE. Darry! (*Startled, calling sharply as* ANNETTE *reaches the first landing on her way up with the bags:*) Wait! Annette! Where are you taking them?

ANNETTE. To the big room, ma'am. That's where you told me to take them before.

ELOISE (R. *front of the couch*). But not *both* bags!

HILARY. There—there! Don't mind me. (*He rises.*) Behave exactly as if I weren't here.

ELOISE (*firmly*). I won't have any other bag with mine!!

HILARY (*to* ELOISE). Just as you like, my dear. (*Turns to* ANNETTE.) Annette, put Mr. McKnight's bag—all by its lonesome—in the room adjoining.

ANNETTE (*with alacrity*). Yes, sir.

(*She continues up the stairs and going along the balcony, exits in the room* R. *Puts down* DARRELL'S *bag and after a few seconds' pause, she re-enters, crosses to the room* C. *on the balcony and exits with the other.*)

HILARY (*moving to front of the table*). My one thought is to make you comfortable and happy! You know that.

DARRELL (*moving down to* R. *of* HILARY. *Resentful and disappointed*). If that's true, why don't you go?

HILARY (*grieved*). My dear man——

DARRELL (*interrupting*). You must realize your presence here is making it exceedingly awkward for all of us!

HILARY. Ye-es, I do, but——

DARRELL (*breaking in*). We've done what you wanted! We've come here instead of going elsewhere as we'd planned—surely the least *you* can do is to go and leave us to enjoy ourselves in peace!

HILARY. You don't expect me to walk back, do you?

DARRELL. I would—if the situation were reversed.

HILARY. Unfortunately, we've no means of proving that assertion.

DARRELL (*he turns up* R.C. *in a rage*). I can't go on arguing.

HILARY (*following up a few steps on the* L. *side of the table*). However, if you'll just quiet down and finish your supper without giving Eloise nervous indigestion, I'll see if I can't attach wings to my motor and fly back to town. (*Up* C. *at the doors.*) You'll excuse me, won't you?

DARRELL (*sarcastically*). With pleasure!!

HILARY (*lightly*). Don't mention it.

(*He exits* C. *and off to* R.)

(DARRELL *goes quickly up to the* C. *doors and looks off after* HILARY.)

DARRELL (*coming down to* L. *of the "kidney" table. Angrily*). I'm on to *his* little scheme all right! He thinks he'll make us look ridiculous, get tired of the situation and call the elopement off. (*He moves over* L. *of the table* L.C.) But he's got another think coming!

HILARY (*off up* R.). Hello! Well, well—this is a surprise! Come in!

(*He enters* C. *moving to the* L. *of the* C. *opening.*)

NORA (*she follows* HILARY *on through the* C. *doors, dressed in an elaborate afternoon gown. A heavy white veil at first disguises her identity. Up* C., *removing her veil as she speaks*). I beg your pardon. I saw the lights and——

DARRELL (*recognizing her*). Nora!! (*Falling back to* L.)

ELOISE. Mrs. Gail!!

NORA (*stares at her, gazing from one to another. Speaks as she comes down* R.C. *to front of the table*). Well, of all things wonderful and strange! Where am I?

HILARY (*coming down*). In my house, dear lady—— How do you do?

NORA (C.R.). How do I do? I'm cold and tired and disgusted.

I've been sitting in a motor-car—a cheap, uncomfortable motor-car—for an hour at least, while my stupid chauffeur fooled about trying to discover why it had stopped. After taking everything to bits, he found out we'd run out of petrol!

HILARY (C.L.). What? You too?

DARRELL (L.). This seems to be empty-tank night.

NORA (*she crosses to* DARRELL). Oh, hello, Darry!

DARRELL (*shaking hands with no enthusiasm*). Hello!

NORA. It's wonderful to run into you like this. (*She turns to* HILARY.) If I'd known it was your place, I'd have come in long ago! Why don't you have an electric sign out for the benefit of benighted travellers in this wilderness?

HILARY. I would if I thought it would bring me many such a charming traveller as yourself.

NORA (*she turns to* DARRELL). There, Darry—I'm sure you couldn't say anything as pretty as that. (*To* HILARY.) Has anyone a cigarette?

HILARY (*offering his case*). Yes, here we are.

(DARRELL *offering his case.*)

NORA (*freezing* DARRELL *out*). Thanks—I smoke only one at a time.

(DARRELL *jams his case back in his pocket.*)

(*She smiles at* HILARY *and accepts a cigarette from his case.*)

What is on here—a house-party?

ELOISE (*front of couch* R. *Hastily*). Ye-es—a *sort* of house-party.

HILARY. There are only three of us, you see. (*Takes out match safe and lights match.*)

DARRELL (L.). And three people hardly constitute a house-party.

HILARY (*holding match for* NORA *to light her cigarette*). We just took a notion to motor down for a few days. I have a book to finish.

(*He starts putting the dishes back on tray to make room for the coffee.*)

NORA. Yes?

(*She sits* L. *of the table.*)

HILARY. And McKnight volunteered to keep Eloise from being bored.

(*He is busy with the dishes, working from the* R. *front side of the table.*)

NORA. Yes?—I recommend him to keep any woman from being bored. He used to keep me from being bored, once!

(*She smiles sweetly at* DARRELL, *who turns up stage.* HILARY *sits* R. *of the table.*)

CARTER (*enters from the pantry* R. *with coffee percolator on a tray. The alcohol flame is burning and the coffee ready to serve*). The coffee, sir.

(*He goes to above the table* C. NORA *puts* DARRELL'S *plate on the tray already on the table and draws the tray toward her to make room for the coffee.* CARTER *places the coffee in front of* HILARY *and arranges the things on the "Eggs Mornay" tray, making it ready to carry off.*)

NORA. Coffee! The one thing I wanted most on earth!

HILARY (*drawing coffee from the percolator*). Then you must have the first cup.

NORA. Thanks.

HILARY. Black, or do you prefer cream and sugar?

NORA. Black, if it's good coffee—sugar and cream, if it's not.

HILARY (*handing her the cup*). Perhaps you'd better taste it.

NORA (*taking the cup*). Perhaps I had. (*She sniffs.*) It smells scrumptious! (*She tastes it.*) Thanks! I'll drink it black!

HILARY (*with a little laugh*). Thanks for the compliment.

(CARTER *starts toward the pantry* R. *with the "Eggs Mornay" tray.*)

NORA. Well, if you really appreciate it, perhaps I might beg some cognac!

HILARY (*drawing the second cup of coffee*). Indeed you may. (*Turns to* CARTER.) Some cognac, Carter.

CARTER (*near the pantry door* R.). Yes, sir.

(*He exits* R.)

NORA. I know it's bad for me, but I don't care.

(HILARY *rises and goes to* ELOISE, *offering her coffee.*)

I like things that are bad for me.

(*She smiles sweetly at* DARRELL, *who looks disgustedly at her.*)

ELOISE (*refusing the coffee*). No, thanks.

NORA (*to* ELOISE). You have to consider your complexion, my dear. That's where I have the advantage. Nothing that I do interferes with mine.

(*She takes a lip-stick from her hand-bag and a small mirror and rouges her cheeks.*)

HILARY (*he goes back to the table, offering the coffee to* DARRELL). McKnight?

DARRELL (*leaning against the Vocalion* L.). No, thanks!

NORA. So you are deep in a new book, eh?

HILARY (*sits* R. *of the table*). Yes, it's almost finished.

NORA. And may one ask what it's about? What problem that's been troubling the universe do you solve this time?

HILARY (*after a look at* ELOISE *and* DARRELL). The problem of matrimony.

NORA. If you succeed in solving that problem, you'll deserve the prize.

CARTER (*enters from the pantry* R. *with decanter of cognac and four "pony" glasses on a tray. The glasses are filled*). The cognac, sir.

(*He goes to above the table.*)

HILARY. For Mrs. Gail, Carter.

(CARTER *holds the tray to* NORA.)

NORA (*taking a glass*). Thank you, Carter. Will you ask my chauffeur to let me know when he's ready?

CARTER. Certainly, ma'am.

(*He turns up with the tray and catches* DARRELL'S *eye who signals for him to leave the cognac. He places the tray on the desk up* L.C. *and exits* C. *and off to* R.)

NORA (*sipping her cognac*). You have a discriminating taste, my friend. The only advantage I ever found in being married to a drunkard was that I learned the difference between good liquor and bad. Ned Gail was a connoisseur, you know.

HILARY (*in chair* R. *of table*). Yes, so I've heard.

NORA. It was learning to be one that finished him. You can't be a connoisseur of liquor and drive a motor-car at the same time.

ELOISE (*sweetly cattish. She is on couch* R.). It's less than a year since he died, isn't it, Mrs. Gail?

NORA. Well, yes and no. It's less than a year officially—but he'd been dead to me for a long time before that.

(DARRELL *leaves his place at the Vocalion and turns up to the desk and takes a glass of cognac from the tray and drops down to the* L. *corner.*)

ELOISE (*sweetly*). Yes, I heard it was a romantic marriage.

NORA. Romantic? I should say it was. We spent our honeymoon in the woods. I was to do the cooking—Ned was to shoot and do all the little odd jobs and we were to sleep in the open—bathe in the brook and get to know each other in the sylvan solitudes.

HILARY. Didn't it work?

NORA. Hardly! My cooking failed me. Ned chopped his hand instead of the wood and on my way to bathe in the rippling brook—I tumbled into a bed of stinging nettles. My dear!!

ELOISE. If you'd really been in love such little things wouldn't have mattered.

(*She smiles across at* DARRELL.)

(DARRELL *over* L. *smiles and nods approvingly.*)

NORA (*resenting*). Little things! Have *you* ever tumbled into a bed of stinging nettles?

ELOISE. Can't say that I have.

NORA. Well, don't do it on your honeymoon. (*She smiles at* ELOISE *and* DARRELL.) In fact, don't do it at any time. Don't even *go* where nettles grow. They're deadly to romance. After three days of that *sylvan misery* Ned and I began to hate each other and to realize that marriage is a mistake.

HILARY. Don't you think that any marriages are happy? I always end my stories with a wedding.

NORA. Exactly. You know what the finish would be if you carried them any further.

(*She and* HILARY *laugh merrily.*)

CARTER (*enters* C. *from off* R.). If you please, sir, Thompson says we've no petrol to lend Mrs. Gail's chauffeur.

NORA (*rising*). No petrol?

HILARY (*rising*). We haven't a drop on the place. Both the tanks on both our cars leaked to-night, thereby putting both cars out of commission!

(CARTER *comes down to above the table and puts the coffee things back on the tray, leaving only* NORA'S *cup.*)

NORA (*anxiously*). But surely there's a place where petrol can be bought, isn't there?

DARRELL (*grimly sarcastic*). Not within six miles—I'm told!

NORA (*startled*). Good Heavens! Then I'm stranded here—not only for the moment, but for the night?

HILARY. I am delighted to tell you, dear lady, that you are!

ELOISE (*rising suddenly*). Good Heavens!!

(*She turns to the fireplace.*)

(HILARY *turns and smiles broadly in her direction and then turns to* NORA.)

NORA. Isn't it a good thing I fell among friends?

HILARY. I hope you won't mind making a very welcome fourth, Mrs. Gail? We'll be a *small* party—only two couples. But so congenial!

NORA. Thank you. I shall be charmed. (*She turns and smiles broadly at* DARRELL.) I shall be charmed.

(DARRELL *hastily gulps down the balance of his drink and turns up* L. *to the desk and puts the glass down on the tray.*)

HILARY (*who has turned up* R.C. *on* DARRELL'S *business*). I dare say Eloise can help you with some things.

ELOISE (*over* R. *Without warmth*). Certainly.

NORA (L. *of the table*). That's very sweet of you, dear. But fortunately I have a few extra things with me.

HILARY (*up* R.C.). Really? How astonishing!

NORA. Yes, they're in my bag in the car.

HILARY. Good. (*He starts up to the doors* C.) I'll go and fetch them for you.

NORA (*crosses to* C.). No, don't bother.

HILARY (*up* C.). Oh, I insist. You stay here and keep the young people pleasant, happy and amused. I won't be long.

(*He exits* C. *and off to* R.)

NORA (*after a slight pause, during which she looks at* DARRELL, *then at* ELOISE, ELOISE *turns away to the fireplace*). Well, this is quite an adventure, isn't it? Lucky you hadn't an even number here already.

ELOISE (*sweetly sarcastic*). Yes, isn't it?

NORA (*front of the table*). An extra woman always upsets things so. Trying to capture the other women's men. It's so much nicer to be paired off—like this.

ELOISE (*exasperated. She crosses up by the* R. *end of the couch to the* R. *stairway and goes quickly up the stairs*). If you'll excuse me, I think I'll see what has become of Annette!

NORA (*crosses to her* C.R., *looking up at her*). Annette?

ELOISE (*up* C. *on the balcony. Sarcastically*). My maid. I have one, you know.

(*She exits into the* C. *room on the balcony.*)

NORA (*indifferently*). Oh, certainly. (*She moves to front of the couch* R., *speaking as she goes.*) Well, Darry—it wasn't good-bye after all—was it?

DARRELL (*he goes up* R.C.). How did you know we were down here?

NORA. Oh, come now, Darry—— (*She sits on the couch* R.) You're not going to accuse me of deliberately following you here.

DARRELL. You're a very clever woman, Nora.

NORA. You flatter me, darling.

DARRELL. It's strange—your arriving at this particular spot at this particular hour of the night—after telling me you were going to stay in town.

NORA. I hadn't counted on the reaction after your charming dinner. It was such a shock to me, and I felt so lonely I decided to go home.

DARRELL (R.C.). Your home being in the opposite direction from here—or have you moved since dinner?

NORA. No. We took the wrong turning by mistake.

DARRELL (*sarcastically*). Yes, and landed at the Farringtons' door with your luggage in the car—all prepared to stay.

NORA. You always were suspicious, Darry.

DARRELL. Well, I have a right to be, haven't I?

NORA (*she rises*). No, you haven't. You told me you were going West. (*She crosses in front of* DARRELL *to* C.) How was I to know you were down here?

DARRELL. How do you always know everything?

(*He moves* R. *to front of* R. *end of couch.*)

NORA (*turning to him*). Divine intuition, I suppose. But you've nothing to worry about this time. I realize now that all you said at dinner was true. We never could have been happy together and it's happened for the best. As for Eloise . . .

DARRELL. What about her?

NORA (C.L.). It *is* rather an embarrassing situation for her. I dare say she feels a bit uncomfortable.

DARRELL (R.). Naturally.

NORA. I want you both to ignore me utterly. Behave exactly as if I were not here.

DARRELL. Yes, that's what Farrington said.

NORA (*she goes to* DARRELL *as she speaks*). Oh, Hilary?—don't worry about him. I'll take him off your hands. I'm going to return good for evil, Darry dear. I'll see that Hilary is kept out of your way so that you and Eloise can bill and coo to your hearts' content.

(ELOISE *enters from the* C. *room on the balcony and comes slowly down the* L. *stairway, overhearing.*)

There now, you'll admit that I'm being nice, won't you?

DARRELL (*doubtingly*). Well—it's something, anyway.

NORA (*gaily, realizing that* ELOISE *is overhearing*). Oh, it isn't going to bore me. I find Hilary most interesting and amusing. In fact, I like Hilary.

DARRELL (*he faces her accusingly*). Oh, *do* you?

NORA (*pleasantly, but defiantly*). I do—but don't worry—it's purely platonic.

(ELOISE *holds on the first landing until* HILARY *speaks to her.*)

HILARY (*enters* C. *from off* R., *followed by* THOMPSON, *who carries a large black leather suit-case. As he enters*). Here we are. Where is Eloise? (*As he sees* ELOISE *at the foot of the stairs* L.). Oh, Eloise, shall we put Mrs. Gail in the corner room?

(ANNETTE *comes from the* C. *room on the balcony and goes into the room* L. *She has taken off hat and coat.*)

ELOISE (*moving down* L.). I've just told Annette to have it made ready.

HILARY (*above the* L. *side of the table*). Good. (*He turns to* THOMP-

SON.) The corner room, Thompson. (*Indicates the room up* L. *on the balcony.*)

THOMPSON. Yes, sir.

(*He carries the bag up the* L. *stairway and crossing the balcony exits into the* L. *room.*)

HILARY (*coming down* L. *of the table. To* NORA). You'll find it comfortable, I'm sure.

NORA (C.R.). Oh, I can be comfortable anywhere. But don't bother about me. I'm not going to turn in yet.

HILARY. Aren't you tired?

(THOMPSON *enters from the room* L. *on the balcony, followed by* ANNETTE. THOMPSON *comes down the* L. *stairway and smiles up at* ANNETTE *who smiles at him.* THOMPSON *goes up to the* C. *doors.* ANNETTE *crosses the balcony and comes down the* R. *stairway and exits into the pantry* R.)

NORA. Yes, but I must have a breath of fresh air, first. (*With a glance at* DARRELL.) There's a wonderful moon and I'd love to see your garden in the moonlight.

HILARY. Delighted, dear lady. Come along!

(THOMPSON *exits* C., *and off to* R.)

NORA (*to* DARRELL). There, Darry—am I not nice?

(*She moves up to the doors up* C.)

DARRELL. Huh!

(*He sits on the* R. *arm of the couch, his back to her.*)

HILARY (*moving to* ELOISE, *who is* L.). Don't look so disappointed, my dear. I'll keep Mrs. Gail out of doors as long as I possibly can.

ELOISE. That's kind of you, I'm sure.

NORA. Coming, Hilary?

HILARY. Yes, in one moment, dear. (*He goes to the table up* R.C.) There's everything here to entertain yourselves with. (*Taking books, playing cards and dominoes, etc., which are arranged for him on the table up* R.C. *by couch.*) Cards—books——

DARRELL (*over his shoulder, sarcastically*). Yours?

HILARY (*bringing the checker-board, etc., to the table* C.). Yes, very interesting. (*Placing the books, etc., on the table.*) *And* tiddley winks——

DARRELL (*he rises, exploding*). Tiddleywinks!

HILARY (*above the table*). I'm sure you play, old man.

(DARRELL *sits on the couch.*)

(*As he crosses above the table to chair* L. *of the table.*) Ring for Carter if you want anything to drink. The lid's off for to-night. (*Placing*

the chair L. *of the table for* ELOISE.) Here you are, Eloise. Come along.

(ELOISE *crosses to front of the chair* L. *of the table.* HILARY *seats her.*)

Forget that there is anyone here but yourselves. (*Smiling broadly at* DARRELL *and* ELOISE, *he crosses up on* NORA'S R. *She is standing* L. *of the* C. *opening.*) That's right.

(DARRELL *and* ELOISE *stare gloomily front.*)

NORA. Don't they make a charming, domestic picture.

(*She and* HILARY *laugh.*)

DARRELL. Huh!!

HILARY (*to* NORA). You're sure you feel quite safe with me in the moonlight?

NORA (*laughing*). The question is—do you feel quite safe with me?

HILARY. I'll take a chance.

(*They both laugh and exit* C. *and off to* L.)

ELOISE (*turning to* DARRELL). Of all the women in the world it had to be her and of all the places it had to be here. Could anything be more aggravating?

DARRELL. Well, it's not the sort of an evening I expected to have.

(NORA *and* HILARY *laugh loudly off up* L.)

(DARRELL *rises, looks disgustedly at* ELOISE, *who turns away. He moves up to the push button set in the* R. *stairway and rings for* CARTER. *After pressing the button he stands looking out into the garden off up* L.)

CARTER (*enters from the pantry* R.). Did you ring, sir?

DARREL (*speaking sharply*). Yes. Bring me a whisky and soda.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He exits* R.)

ELOISE (*in chair* L. *of the table*). Another Darrell? You had about four out of your flask on the way out.

DARRELL (*coming down* R. *of the table. Irritably*). Well, suppose I had? Is that any reason why I shouldn't have six—or a dozen—if I want them?

ELOISE (*judicially*). No-o, but why do you want them?

DARRELL (*gloomily*). Oh, it's this place! It's driving me to drink!

(*He moves* R. *to front of the couch.*)

ELOISE. It is dull—but I knew that before I came.

DARRELL. Well, you kept mighty quiet about it!

(Carter *enters from pantry* R., *with a whisky and soda on a tray and comes down* R.C. *to* Darrell.)

Carter. Your whisky and soda, sir.

Darrell (*taking it*). Thanks.

(*He sips it appreciatively.*)

Carter. Anything else, sir?

Darrell. Yes—another one.

Carter. Very good, sir.

(*He turns and exits into the pantry* R.)

(Nora *and* Hilary *are heard laughing and chatting off up* L.)

Eloise (*exasperated*). They seem interested enough out there!

Darrell (*looking enviously toward the* C. *doors*). Don't they?

Eloise. And here we are, boring each other to death.

Darrell (*wearily*). Well, we've nothing to do!

Eloise. If I were a man, alone with the woman I loved, I'd find something to do! They have!

Darrell. Well, they're easily satisfied—with walks in the garden and conversation. It takes more than a copy of the Vicar of Wakefield to give me an exciting evening!

Eloise (*rises*). Do you remember telling me—that you'd like to carry me off to a desert island where we'd be alone for ever and ever?

Darrell. I do—what of it?

Eloise (*wearily*). Thank God you didn't do it, Darry—that's all!

(*She sinks wearily into the chair* L. *of the table.* Nora *and* Hilary *laugh loudly off up* L.)

Darrell (*goes quickly up to the* C. *doors and looks off* L. *Imitates* Nora's *laugh. After a moment's pause, he comes down to the back of the chair* R. *of the table, smiling wisely*). I'm beginning to think they're putting something over on us.

Eloise. What do you mean?

Darrell. When he was so willing to divorce you—I began to wonder. And when Nora turned up here so—unexpectedly—I began to wonder more!

Eloise. You began to wonder—what?

Darrell (*leaning over, confidentially*). Did you notice how she acted when she first came in? How excited and bewildered she was? How surprised to see us?

Eloise (*puzzled*). Yes?

Darrell. And he had to prompt her with questions.

Eloise (*in chair* L. *of the table. Still guessing*). Did he?

Darrell. And she brought her luggage, too.

Eloise (*her interest quickening*). Well?

Darrell. Remember the supper?—the flowers?—the fire?

Even if Farrington did beat us here by taking a short cut, do you suppose he'd have had time to arrange all this?

Eloise (*rising, aghast*). You don't—mean?

Darrell. Exactly—this meeting was prearranged!

Eloise (*she takes a step back*). Darrell!

Darrell. Either he intended to call it off when he sent us down here—or he didn't remember about it until after we'd left. As soon as he realized we'd meet her here, he came, too!

Eloise (*horrified*). You think they had planned to meet here to-night?

Darrell (*emphatically*). I do!

(*He goes to front of the couch* R.)

Eloise (*long indrawn breath*). O—h! Then he's been deceiving me! Oh! this is too much!

(Nora *and* Hilary *are heard laughing off up* L.)

(Eloise *goes up to the* C. *doors as she hears* Nora *and* Hilary *laughing in the garden.*)

I can't believe she'd be so brazen. In my own house—under my very nose.

Darrell (*front of couch* R.). Two and two make four, I think.

Eloise (*as she comes down* L. *of the table*). Well, I'm going to find out, that's all. I'll never rest now till I know the truth.

Nora (*enters* C. *from off* L.). There's a storm coming up and we thought we'd better come in. (*Noticing* Eloise's *strange expression, and going down to her.*) What's the matter, dear?

Eloise (*about to speak, hesitates and suddenly starts for the up* L. *stairway*). I'm going to bed!

(*She rushes up the stairs and exits into* C. *room on the balcony.*)

Nora (*moving to front of the table and calling after her*). Good night, dear. (*She moves to* Darrell, *who is* R.) I do hope she isn't annoyed at our coming in so soon. Hilary is simply frozen stiff from sitting out in the cold.

(Darrell *finishes his drink and puts the glass on the mantel.*)

Darrell. H'm! I didn't notice anything cold between you.

Nora. Now, Darry, behave!—I thought you were having a perfectly ducky time together. If I'd known that you weren't taking advantage of our absence I wouldn't have kept poor Hilary out there so long.

(Hilary *is seen outside up* C., *looking up at the approaching storm.*)

Darrell. Don't try to pull the wool over my eyes, Nora. It won't work. I'm on to the whole game.

Nora. Really?

Darrell. I'm not a fool. This meeting was prearranged. You and he planned to meet here. That's how you happened to run out of petrol at this particular spot with a carefully prepared wardrobe.

Nora. How clever you are, Darry.

Hilary (*enters up* c.). We're going to have a bad storm, I'm afraid. It's beginning to rain.

(*He closes the French doors and locks them.*)

Nora (*she moves front to* l.c.). Not a thunderstorm, I hope. I'm terribly afraid of lightning!

Hilary (*coming down* r. *of the table*). Where's Eloise?

Darrell. Gone to bed.

Hilary. Good idea. Perhaps we'd better follow her example.

Nora. Isn't it rather early?

Hilary (*with pleasant sarcasm*). Past midnight.

Nora. Dear me, I had no idea it was as early as that. (*Moving up toward the* l. *stairway.*)

Hilary (*to above the table*). Is there anything more I can do for you?

Nora (*up* l. *near foot of stairs*). I hope you haven't a tin roof.

Hilary. Why?

Nora. Rain always makes me feel so lonely.

Hilary (*laughs*). I'm afraid we have.

Nora. Good gracious—I shan't sleep a wink!

(*She goes up the stairs to up* l. *on the balcony.*)

Hilary (*up* c., *looking up at her*). Well—if you are awake—and thinking—Why not of *me?*

Nora (*up* l. *on the balcony. Coyly, for the benefit of* Darrell). After our talk in the garden, how could I help it? Good night, Darry!

Darrell. Good night!

Nora. Good night, Hilary.

Hilary. Good night, dear!

(*Lightning and very faint thunder.*)

(Nora *exits into room* l. *on the balcony. A pause while* Hilary *goes up to the doors up* c. *and lowers the French blinds. He comes down to the table and starts to straighten things up.* Darrell *has picked up a book and turns the pages over.*)

(*To* Darrell). Aren't you going to bed? (*Bringing the tray down to the table* c.)

Darrell (*over* r., *turning over pages*). Aren't you?

Hilary. Just as soon as I've cleared up some of these things.

(*Fussing with the cards and books. Finally he takes up a book and imitates* Darrell.)

(*After a long pause* Darrell *throws down his book in disgust and goes up* r. *to the stairs and on to the balcony.*)

Darrell (*from up* r. *on the balcony*). I say, Farrington?

Hilary (*looking up*). Yes?

Darrell. Strange how all three cars happened to run out of petrol at the same time.

Hilary. Yes, wasn't it funny?

Darrell. Damned funny!

(*He exits into room up* r. *on the balcony.*)

(Hilary *moves about making ready for the night. He takes the cards, books, etc., from the* c. *table to the table up* r.c. *He goes back to the* c. *table and taking up the tray, carries it into the pantry* r. *There is a slight pause and the light in the pantry* r. *goes out. He re-enters and going to the table lamp on the "kidney" table at the* l. *end of the couch, he turns off the lamp. He moves to the desk up* l.c. *and turns on the desk lamp. He glances around the room and goes to the switch above the door* l.1, *and after pausing to look up at* Darrell's *room, he switches out the bracket lights. He closes the door* l.1 *and moves toward the desk up* l.c. *He pauses and glances up at* Darrell's *room. He then faces front and takes his revolver from his pocket. Looks at it, then up at* Darrell's *room. Places the revolver down on the desk and sits at the desk in the dim light of the desk lamp. He draws paper to him and taking up his pen, prepares to write.*)

(Darrell's *door opens slowly. The door squeaks.* Hilary *looks up.* Darrell *is seen entering clad in a velvet lounge-robe. He silently curses the noisy door, leaving it open. He looks out front, listening. He starts to move carefully along the balcony toward* Eloise's *door. The balcony flooring creaks at each step.* Hilary *half-rises and watches, but remains unseen by* Darrell. *The audience realizes that* Hilary *is in an agony of doubt.* Darrell *reaches* Eloise's *door and looks about. He still fails to see* Hilary. *He knocks softly on the door. The rain stops here.*)

Eloise (*faintly from within*). Hello? who is it? (Darrell *looks cautiously about him. He knocks again.* Eloise *opens the door, starts back in disappointment. In a hoarse whisper.*) Oh, it's you!—What is it?

(*She half-closes the door.*)

Darrell (*takes her* l. *hand in his* r. *hand and draws her forward so that she is entirely out of the room. In a hoarse whisper*). I want to speak to you.

Eloise. Well? You'll have to hurry, I'm half-undressed.

Darrell (*still whispering*). We can't talk here. Mayn't I come in?

Eloise. Certainly *not!*

(*She starts to retreat.*)

DARRELL (*restraining her*). Why mayn't I?

ELOISE. I'm tired and the storm's beginning. I'm terribly afraid of thunder and lightning.

DARRELL. But, I want to talk to you.

ELOISE. In the morning, Darry!

DARRELL. No, now! Let me come in a minute. (*Attempting to crowd past her into the room.*)

ELOISE (*restraining him. Raising her voice*). Now, Darry, please —you mustn't!

(HILARY *rises as though to interfere.*)

NORA (*opens her door and speaks through the crack*). Hello!

(DARRELL *bolts quickly into* ELOISE'S *room and closes the door.* ELOISE *stands trembling before it holding it shut as* NORA *enters, attired in a charming négligée.*)

Is anything the matter?

(HILARY *sits again, relieved.*)

ELOISE (*nervously*). Why no—of course—not—why?

NORA (*moving a little toward* ELOISE). I thought I heard someone calling.

ELOISE. It must have been the rain.

NORA. You're sure you're not nervous, dear?

ELOISE (*with forced laugh*). Nervous? No, indeed.

NORA. I don't mind coming in with you for a few minutes—if you are.

(*She moves forward as though to go in room.*)

ELOISE (*desperately. Quickly stopping her*). No, thank you—it's just the storm that keeps me awake. (*Looks critically at* NORA.) You'd better go to bed before you catch cold in that flimsy thing.

NORA (*cheerfully*). It is thin, isn't it? But then, I didn't know whom I might meet out here.

ELOISE (*shocked*). Oh!!! (NORA *goes back into her door. Lightning and thunder.*)

(*Opening her door. Speaking sharply in a whisper*).

Come on out

DARRELL (*cautiously peeping out; speaking in a low, hoarse whisper*). Has she gone?

ELOISE. Yes. Come out!

DARRELL (*catching hold of her and tugging*). You come in!

(HILARY *rises, tense. His hand on the revolver.*)

ELOISE (*fending him off*). No! Stop!! I'll scream. Darrell!!

(HILARY *coughs to notify them. They both pause instantly.*)

(*In a whisper.*) Who was that?

(DARRELL *sneaks across the balcony on tiptoe and goes into his own room* R., *closing the door.* HILARY *sits again.* ELOISE *closes her door and looks about, then descends the stairway* R. *When she reaches the foot of the stairs she sees* HILARY *who is sitting calmly at work at the desk.*)

ELOISE. *Hilary!*

HILARY (*looking up from his work*). I can't possibly work with so much noise going on.

ELOISE. (*indignantly—insulted. Advancing to the chair* R. *of the table*). Oh! You were there all the time!

HILARY. Yes, but I had no intention of interfering.

ELOISE (*furiously*). No, I suppose not. You'd be glad to have me disgrace myself.

HILARY (*rising and coming down to chair* L. *of the table*). Not at all. You eloped with this man, of your own free will, didn't you?

ELOISE (*to* C.R. *front of the table. With spirit.*) Yes, I did elope with him—but only because I thought you wouldn't give me a divorce unless I was compromised! I didn't know that you were just as anxious to have one, as *I* was!

HILARY (C.L.). *I?*

ELOISE. Oh, don't try to deny it! I can see through your little game with Nora Gail.

HILARY. With Nora Gail?

ELOISE (*angrily*). Oh, you're both very innocent, I know, but I'll tell you this much, Hilary Farrington, if either of us gets a divorce *I'll* be the one to get it! And if either of us is compromised, *you'll* be the one!

(*She crosses* HILARY *to* L.)

HILARY (*startled*). What do you mean?

ELOISE (*over* L., *turning to* HILARY). It was very clever of you to plan for *me* to pull your chestnuts out of the fire—but your little plan *isn't going to work*!

(*She turns to the door* L. 1—*her hand on the knob.*)

HILARY. Where are you going?

ELOISE. *I'm* going to sleep in *your room*, and you can have the room adjoining Mr. Darrell McKnight!!

(*She goes into the room* L.1, *banging the door.*)

(HILARY *stands for an instant thinking, looking front. He suddenly starts to enter the room* L.1, *and the key is heard to turn in the lock. He laughs softly, then turns up to the desk up* L.C. *and turns out the desk lamp. He looks toward the door* L.1 *and laughs again. He goes up the* L. *stairway to up* C. *on the balcony and leaning over the railing toward the* L.1 *door, laughs again. He turns and exits into the room* C. *on the balcony. There is a series of flashes and a loud clap of*

thunder. After a short pause, Darrell's *door opens slowly and he looks out. He comes out of the room leaving the door open behind him and peeks cautiously over the balcony railing at the room below. Satisfied that the coast is clear, he tiptoes to the room now occupied by* Hilary *and raps gently on the door.*)

Darrell (*at* L. *of the door; calling sweetly, softly*). Oooh—oo! Ooh—oo! (*There is no answer. After a pause he knocks softly again.*) Oooh—ooo! Ooh—ooo! Sweetheart! Oooh—oo!

Hilary (*as he suddenly throws the door open and appears in his shirt-sleeves. In a loud voice*). What the hell do you want?

Darrell (*staggering back against the balcony railing—his hand clutching his forehead*). Oh, my God! (*He hurries along the balcony till near his own door and then turns quickly and speaks.*) She's deceived me!

(*Lightning and loud clap of thunder.*)

Quick Curtain.

Average Time of Act—35 *minutes.*

ACT III

Scene.—*The same as Act II.*

Time.—*The following morning.*

Lights.—*The room is flooded with sunlight through the open garden windows.*

At Rise.—Carter *is discovered standing at the* R. *rear of the table* C. *arranging the breakfast dishes. The table is covered with a white tablecloth. Four coffee cups, saucers and spoons are at* Eloise's *place at the* R. *of the table. The breakfast plates are placed and the silver is bunched for* Carter *to lay. There is a plate of bread ready to toast in the* C. *of the table.* Carter *is imbued with a cheerful morning spirit and hums gaily to himself as he works.*

Nora *enters from the room up* L. *on the balcony and comes down the* L. *stairway. She is attired in a most becoming négligée.*

Nora (*as she comes down the stairs*). Good morning, Carter.

Carter (*looking up from his work*). Good morning, ma'am.

Nora (*coming down* L. *of chair* L. *of table*). Am I the first down?

Carter. Oh, no, ma'am. Both the gentlemen is up and out.

Nora (L. *of the table* C.). Not Mr. McKnight surely?

Carter. Yes, ma'am. He was the first. Must have been up since dawn. He made so much noise in here that he woke *me* up.

Nora. Dear me, that's most unusual for Darry. Where *is he*?

Carter (*above the table*). Walking in the garden, ma'am.

Nora (*incredulously*). With Mr. Farrington?

Carter. Oh, no, ma'am—Mr. Farrington has gone to the village.

Nora (*as she goes up to the* C. *doors*). The village! That's six miles.

Carter. He said something about expecting a telegram, ma'am. (*Straightens chair* R. *of table.*)

Nora. Oh! What a heavenly morning! (*She steps out on to the porch.*)

(Annette *enters from the pantry* R. *with the coffee percolator on a tray. She goes to the table and places the tray on the upper* R. *side of the table.*)

Carter (*moving to the* L. *side of the table as* Nora *goes up, and straightens the chair* L. *of the table*). Yes, ma'am, it's cleared up nicely.

It's sure to be a beautiful day. (*To* ANNETTE.) You can tell MRS. Farrington breakfast is ready.

ANNETTE (R. *of table* C.). Shan't I bring the toast ?

CARTER (*moves to above the table*). You can bring that after you've told MRS. Farrington.

(ANNETTE *crosses front of the table to the door* L.1 *and knocks.* CARTER, *after a look at the table, exits into the pantry* R. NORA *steps into the room and remains up* C.)

ELOISE (*in room* L.1, *as* ANNETTE *knocks*). Who is it ?

ANNETTE. Your breakfast, madame.

ELOISE (*in the room* L.1). Oh, very well.

(ANNETTE *moves above the table* C. *and exits into the pantry* R. NORA, *who has watched* ANNETTE *with growing surprise, comes down* L.C. *as* ELOISE *enters from the bedroom attired in an equally charming négligée.*)

NORA. Good morning, dearest. You look positively blooming this morning. (*Attempts to embrace* ELOISE.)

ELOISE (*coldly. Avoiding the embrace*). Good morning.

(*She goes front to* R. *of the table* C.)

NORA. Oh, come now, you should feel particularly good tempered this morning. *I* do.

(*She moves to* L. *of the table* C.)

ELOISE (*fussing with the cups and saucers*). You've more reason to be good tempered than I have.

NORA. Why pretend with me, my dear ? I'm sure that Hilary would never have started on a six-mile walk before breakfast unless he felt fairly happy.

ELOISE. Has Hilary gone to the village ?

(CARTER *enters from the pantry* R. *with milk jug and sugar bowl and goes to above the table* C.)

NORA. So Carter tells me.

(CARTER *takes the bowl and pitcher from the tray and places them on the table.*)

ELOISE. H'm ! He *must* be happy. But I shan't wait for him. (*She sits in chair* R. *of the table.*) I want my coffee.

CARTER (*above the table* C.). Shall I tell Mr. McKnight that breakfast is ready ?

ELOISE (*drawing her cup of coffee*). Where is he, Carter ?

CARTER. Walking in the garden, ma'am. Shall I call him ?

ELOISE. Yes—please do.

CARTER. Yes, ma'am.

(*He exits* C. *and off to* L. *into the garden, carrying tray.*)

NORA (*moving the chair from the desk up* L.C. *to above the table* C.). I do hope he's good tempered, though from my knowledge of the species and their habits before breakfast—(*she sits above the table*) —I'm prepared for anything.

(ANNETTE *enters from the pantry* R. *with the toast. She places it in front of* NORA *and goes out.*)

ELOISE. He may not be good tempered—but I know of no reason for him to be disagreeable.

NORA. Don't you ? Oh, well, it doesn't really matter—but it's so pleasant to start the day off with a man. (*Handing toast to* ELOISE.) Toast, dear ? Do you like your toast crisp ? I do, but then I'm on a diet, like most widows.

(DARRELL *enters* C. *from* L.)

ELOISE (*looking up as* DARRELL *enters*). Hello, Darry !

DARRELL (*coldly. Coming down* R. *of* ELOISE). Good morning.

NORA. Good morning, Darry. You're just in time for coffee. Sit down. (*Drawing a cup of coffee from the percolator.*)

DARRELL (*he moves in front of table to* L. *of chair,* L. *of table*). I don't want any coffee, thank you. (*Pulls chair* L. *of the table away from the table.*)

NORA. Well, you'll have something to eat, won't you ?

DARRELL. I don't want anything to eat.

(*He sits facing front. Back slightly turned to them.*)

ELOISE (*leaning forward over the table*). Why, Darry, you must eat something.

DARRELL (*sore*). I don't want *to eat anything.*

NORA. Well, what *do* you want, darling child ?

DARRELL. A whisky and soda.

ELOISE. At this hour in the morning ?

DARRELL. The hour doesn't matter. And I want a drink.

NORA. Bless his heart—he shall have his drink.

(*Enter* CARTER C. *from* L. *with tray in his hand and crosses to the pantry* R.)

Carter, a whisky and soda for Mr. McKnight.

CARTER. Yes, ma'am.

(*He exits into the pantry* R.)

ELOISE (*to* DARRELL). What's the matter with you this morning ?

DARRELL. As if you didn't know.

ELOISE. Well, I *don't* know.

NORA. There, there, my dear—don't allow yourself to be annoyed by a man's early morning temper. It's the nature of the beast, as I told you before. (*Turns in chair to* DARRELL.) What's the matter, Darry—didn't you sleep well ?

DARRELL. Was I expected to sleep well?

NORA. I didn't think the storm would disturb *you*.

DARRELL (*insinuatingly*). It wasn't the *storm* that disturbed me.

NORA. What then?

DARRELL (*with a withering glance at* ELOISE). I'd rather not discuss it—if you don't mind.

NORA. But I'm frankly curious.

DARRELL. Perhaps Eloise will tell you.

NORA. Does Eloise know?

ELOISE (*rises*). No, I don't know! (*To* DARRELL.) And if you're in the habit of rising at an ungodly hour in the morning and behaving like this——

DARRELL (*rising*). I'm not in the habit of rising in the morning at all, but if you expected me to sleep under the circumstances——

(*They lean across the table quarrelling.*)

ELOISE. Under *what* circumstances?

DARRELL. Don't play the innocent with me! I wonder you have the nerve to look me in the face.

ELOISE (*angrily*). Upon my word, I don't know what you're talking about.

DARRELL. Oh, you don't, eh?

ELOISE. No, I don't——

NORA (*rising quickly and separating them—soothingly*). Now, children—behave. You mustn't start the day by quarrelling. It's so bad for your digestion.

(DARRELL *turns away to* L. NORA *sits down again.*)

ELOISE (*she sits*). Well, he has no right to talk to me like that.

NORA. The poor boy has had a bad night.

(CARTER *enters* R. *with a whisky and soda on a tray.* DARRELL *sits again in chair* L. *of the table.*)

Ah, here is his drink. Perhaps that will make him feel better.

(CARTER *goes to above the table and comes down on* DARRELL'S L.)

DARRELL (*as he takes the glass from* CARTER). Thanks. You might as well bring me another, while you're about it.

(CARTER *nods and going above the table, exits* R. *with tray.*)

ELOISE. Another?

DARRELL (*sore*). If *you've* no *objection*.

ELOISE. I don't think it's going to help your disposition much.

DARRELL. Well—it's my disposition, isn't it?

NORA. Oh, he needs something to keep him up—if he hasn't slept.

ELOISE. I didn't sleep either. But I've no desire to be made unconscious now. (*With a wrathful glance at* DARRELL.)

NORA (*rising, decisively*). Perhaps if I left you alone together you could——

ELOISE. Oh, don't bother to go. (*She rises and goes* C. *with cup of coffee.*) There's no use pretending that you don't understand the situation here because we all do and we may as well be frank about it. (*Crosses to couch.*) If something has happened this morning to upset Darry he ought to tell us about it instead of grousing about it like a disagreeable old bear. (*Sits on couch.*)

DARRELL (*he rises*). You know perfectly well what happened—but you won't admit that I know.

ELOISE. I don't know, and you're doing all this to try and upset me.

NORA. Oh, come now, Darry, you mustn't hurt her feelings just because she's fond of you.

(*She sits above table.*)

DARRELL (*over* L.). Oh, yes, she's just crazy about *me*—I know that—especially after last night.

ELOISE (*seated on couch* R.). Last night? Why, I didn't sleep a wink—just for thinking of you. I lay in there—(*she indicates the room* L.1.E.)—the whole night without once closing my eyes.

DARRELL (*sceptically. He looks toward* L.1.E.). In there? (*He looks over at* ELOISE.) Huh!

HILARY (*enters* C. *from* R. *and speaks cheerfully*). Good morning, everybody.

(ELOISE *rises.*)

NORA. Why, Hilary—I understood you'd gone to the village.

HILARY (*placing his hat on the desk up* L.C.). That's right.

NORA. Did you walk or fly back?

(ELOISE *crosses to chair* R. *of the table.*)

HILARY (*as he drops down* L. *of chair* L. *of table*). *Felt* like flying—what with this bracing air and sunshine. I feel great! Good morning, Eloise.

ELOISE. Good morning, Hilary.

(*She sits* R. *of the table.*)

HILARY. 'Morning, McKnight. I trust you slept well.

DARRELL. No, I did *not*.

HILARY. Well, that's too bad. *I* slept like a top.

(*Sits* L. *of the table.*)

(DARRELL *moves back of the table to up* R.C.)

NORA. You're just in time for breakfast, Hilary.

HILARY. Thanks, I've had mine. I had no idea of finding you people up and about so early, so I had mine in the village.

DARRELL (*coming down* R.C.). Did you get any petrol?

HILARY. Yes. I'm having a load of it brought out in a cab.

DARRELL. Good! You'll be glad to know I'm leaving when it comes.

(*He moves to front of the couch* R.)

ELOISE (*she rises*). What?

DARRELL. *I'm* going back to town.

(*He sits on couch* R.)

HILARY. Oh, no, you're not.

DARRELL (*quickly*). Perhaps *you* know what I'm going to do better than I know myself.

HILARY. I think I explained to you last night that I couldn't let you go while there was any chance of a scandal.

DARRELL. You've no objection to my going alone, have you?

HILARY. Alone? (*Looks at* ELOISE.) Of course, that alters things.

(*He rises.*)

ELOISE (R.C., *emphatically*). You are *not* going alone. I refuse to be left here in this position. (*She steps toward* HILARY.) Hilary, as my husband, I insist that you make him take me with him.

HILARY (L.C.). You hear that, McKnight? (*He crosses* R. *to* DARRELL.) The young lady refuses to be separated—so I'm afraid we can't spare you just yet.

DARRELL (*he rises*). Well, if you think I'm going to submit to your dictation any longer, you're mistaken. I know when I've had enough. And I've had enough of this.

HILARY (R.C.). Enough of what? (*He looks at* ELOISE.) Of Eloise?

ELOISE. Oh!!

DARRELL. You know perfectly well what I mean and you're not going to make a fool of me.

(*He turns away to the fireplace* R.)

HILARY (*following him over*). Calm yourself, old man. I admit the situation has been a little trying for you, but we'll remedy that as soon as the petrol comes. (*He turns and faces* NORA, *who is down* L.) I'm sure Mrs. Gail has no desire to remain any longer and as for me—(*he goes to* NORA)—I'll be delighted to escort her home.

NORA. Thank you, Hilary. I'll go and change my dress.

(*She goes up to the stairway up* L. *and starts up the stairs.*)

HILARY (*turning to speak to* DARRELL). So you'll have the place to yourselves. That's what you want, isn't it?

DARRELL (R., *leaning on the mantel*). It doesn't seem to matter what I want.

HILARY. That's just what does matter. Then we'll consider it all settled.

(*He starts up* L.C.)

NORA (*from up* L. *on the balcony*). Oh, Hilary—— (HILARY *looks up at her.*) As I'm to be turned out into the open, I'll need something to keep me warm so mix me a nice cocktail—like a good man.

HILARY (*up* R.C.). Certainly. Bronx—Manhattan—Martini or Perfect?

NORA. A Perfect, of course—if you think you can mix it.

HILARY. It will be something with a kick in it at any rate. One sip and you'll feel sixteen again.

NORA. God forbid!

(*She laughs merrily and exits into room* L. *on the balcony.* HILARY *laughs and exits into the pantry* R.)

ELOISE (*boiling with rage. She goes toward* DARRELL *who is* R.). You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

DARRELL. What for?

ELOISE. For humiliating me in front of that woman. What will she think? What will Hilary think?

DARRELL. I don't care what they think.

ELOISE. But I do care and I'm not going to let *her* have the *satisfaction* of gloating over me. (*Crosses to front of table* L.C.)

DARRELL. Oh, I see—you're just jealous of Nora.

ELOISE. No, I'm not jealous, but I want my divorce—(*she starts for her room* L.1.E.)—and I'm going to stay here until I get it.

DARRELL (*he moves to* R.C.). Where are you going?

ELOISE (*turns to him at* L.). To my room.

DARRELL (R.C.). That's not your room. It's his.

ELOISE. I beg your pardon. We changed rooms last night.

DARRELL. When?

ELOISE. After you had tried to come into my room.

DARRELL (*with dawning comprehension. Faces front*). Oh my hat!

ELOISE (*taking a step toward* DARRELL. *She is now* L. *of table* L.C.). That's another thing I'll never forgive you for. Disgracing me before Hilary.

DARRELL (*he crosses to* L.C.). I'm awfully sorry, Eloise. You see, I thought——

ELOISE. It doesn't matter what you thought.

DARRELL. Well, what would you have thought if you'd found Nora in my room last night?

ELOISE. What?

DARRELL. You didn't, of course; but what the deuce was I to think when I found Farrington in yours?

ELOISE. Oh—what horrible ideas you have!

DARRELL. It's this place. It's got on my nerves. If we could only get away from here—even now——

ELOISE. That would be letting him get the divorce.

DARRELL. But you'll never be free if you wait to get the better of him. You ought to know Farrington by this time. He's got ice-water in his veins.

ELOISE. I don't think she has. Her mother was Spanish.

DARRELL. She says it's purely platonic.

ELOISE. Yes, that's why I expect the worst!

DARRELL. Well, I'm not going to spend the rest of my life here.

(*He goes to* R.C.)

ELOISE (L.). You heard him threaten you if you left.

DARRELL. Well, I may as well be shot as bored to death. Another day in this place will finish me. I'm damned if I sit around here twiddling my thumbs just because he told me to. (*He goes to the telephone on the table up* R.C.) I'll ring up the livery stable and get a cab sent out.

ELOISE (L.C.). What's the use of doing that when there's petrol coming for the car. (*Moves to upper* L. *side of the table, her eyes on* DARRELL.)

DARRELL (*up* R.C. *with 'phone in hand*). That's only his bluff and anyhow I'm not going to chance it. (*In the 'phone.*) Hello! Hello! Give me the livery stable. (*Pause. To* ELOISE.) What's the name? Johnston?

ELOISE. Yes.

DARRELL (*in the 'phone*). Yes, Johnston—that's right. (*To* ELOISE.) And another thing—— (*Quickly into the 'phone.*) Hello. Johnston's? Can you send a cab to the Farrington place right away? What? One on its way now? Yes I know—with petrol. I want one for passengers. What? How long since? No, it hasn't come yet, oh, all right—good-bye. (*He hangs up the receiver and comes down* R.C.) He says there's one on its way now with some man to see Farrington. Came on the morning train.

ELOISE (L.C.). Who can that be?

DARRELL (R. *of the table* L.C.). I know. I'll bet it's his *lawyer*.

ELOISE. His lawyer?

DARRELL. *That's* why he's so anxious for us to stay. He's going to arrange that divorce straight off. But we'll fool him. Are you coming or not?

ELOISE. I—I can't stay here alone. Not with a lawyer!

DARRELL. Good. Then tell your maid to pack.

(ELOISE *goes to the foot of the stairs up* L.)

ELOISE. I just hate that woman!

DARRELL. And I'll get my things together. (*He glances around as though fearful of being overheard.*) And hurry, as the cab may be here any minute.

ELOISE. All right. (*She goes off into the* C. *room.*)

(DARRELL *turns up* L. *to the foot of the stairs.* CARTER *enters* R. *with drink on a tray.*)

CARTER (*coming down* R.C. *to front of table*). Your whisky, sir.

DARRELL (*coming down to* CARTER). Oh, thanks. (*Takes glass from tray and turns up* L.)

(CARTER *places the tray on the table and takes up the tray with the percolator on it and starts* R. DARRELL *suddenly has an idea and comes down to* L. *of table.*)

Oh—Carter.

CARTER (*stops and turns*). Yes, sir.

DARRELL. I wonder if I can get you to do something for me.

CARTER. Certainly, sir.

(ANNETTE *enters from pantry, carrying tray.*)

ELOISE (*from her room*). Annette!

ANNETTE. Yes, ma'am.

ELOISE. Put my things together, we're leaving.

ANNETTE. Very good, ma'am. (*Hands tray to* CARTER, *goes upstairs and exits into* ELOISE'S *room.*)

DARRELL. I'm leaving in a few minutes—there's a cab coming from the village—and I want you to put a trunk on it without Mr. Farrington seeing you.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

DARRELL. It's MRS. Farrington's trunk.

CARTER. Quite so, sir.

DARRELL (*laying a dollar bill on the tray*). You're a clever fellow.

CARTER. Not at all, sir. I'll do all I can to get you safely out of the house.

DARRELL (*with a quick look at* CARTER). What do you mean by that?

CARTER. Nothing, sir. I understood you wanted it done quite secretly.

DARRELL. I do. (*Picking up line quickly.*) But it's not because I'm afraid of Farrington—you understand that?

CARTER. Of course not, sir. Why should you be?

DARRELL. Exactly. Why should I be?

CARTER. Is the trunk ready now, sir?

DARRELL (*with a glance at the room up* C.). In a few minutes. I'll let you know.

CARTER. Very good, sir.

(*He turns and exits into the pantry* R. *with the percolator on the tray.* Darrell *gulps down his drink and places the glass down on the table and goes up the* L. *stairway and stopping before* Eloise's *door, he knocks.*)

Darrell. Almost ready?

Eloise (*in room*). Almost.

Darrell. Good. I'll get my things too.

(*He continues along the balcony to his own room* R. *and exits.*)

Hilary (*enters from the pantry* R., *followed by* Carter. *He goes to the* L. *end of the table up* R.C. *and takes up the 'phone. To* Carter, *as he enters*). You're sure about the trunk, Carter?

Carter (R. *above the couch*). Oh, yes, sir—he's to let me know when it's ready.

Hilary (*in the 'phone*). Hello! Johnston's livery stable, please. (*To* Carter.) Watch the road and let me know the moment the cab comes in sight.

Carter. Yes, sir.

(*He goes out* C. *and off to* R.)

Hilary (*in the 'phone*). Hello—Johnston? Mr. Farrington speaking. What about the cab I ordered this morning? And the gentleman I expected? Yes, grey haired. Both on the way? Good. No, that's all, thank you. Good-bye.

(*He hangs up the receiver and starts for the pantry* R., *but pauses as he hears* Darrell *entering.*)

Darrell (*entering from room* R. *on the balcony and crosses to the* C. *door with an assortment of shirts, pyjamas and his dressing-gown over his arm*). Eloise! Oh, Eloise!

(Hilary *stops, looks up and listens.*)

Eloise (*off in room*). What?

Darrell. Open the door a minute!

Eloise (*appears at the door*). What do you want?

Darrell (*holding out the clothes*). Have you got room for these in your trunk?

Eloise. What?

Darrell. Can you put these in your trunk?

Eloise. Put your clothes in my trunk?

Darrell. Well, why not? I can't go without them—can I?

Eloise (*exasperated. Snatching the clothes*). I'll give them to Annette! She'll see to them.

(Hilary *bursts into quiet laughter and exits into pantry* R.)

Darrell. Don't lose any time. I'll tell Carter to take the trunk as soon as it's ready.

(*She exits, closing the door and* Darrell *comes quickly down the stairs and calls off into the pantry.*)

Carter! Oh, Carter!

Nora (*enters from room* L. *on the balcony*). Hello, Darry!

Darrell. Oh, hello! (*Comes down* R. *of the couch.*)

Nora (*coming down the* L. *stairway*). What are you shrieking for now—another whisky and soda?

Darrell (*to front of* L. *end of couch*). No—just wanted to tell Carter something.

Nora (*to front of table*). Got over your morning hate?

Darrell (*steps towards* Nora). I wish you wouldn't be so infernally cheerful.

Nora. I can't help it, dear. You bring such a ray of sunshine into the morning.

Darrell. Well, I had every right to be peevish. The way you hang around Farrington is disgusting.

Nora. Really, Darry, there's no pleasing you at all. Didn't you literally *beg* me to take him off your hands?

Darrell. Off my hands, yes—but not into your arms!

Nora. Now, Darry, that's too funny. Didn't you take me to dinner last night just to tell me that you were leaving me for another woman?

Darrell (C.R.). Well, at any rate, I was honest with you! You deceived me.

Nora. Oh!

Darrell. Yes, you did! You sat there and looked sad—and tried to squeeze out crocodile tears into your soup——

Nora (*interrupting*). No, no, Darry—you're mixing your courses. You didn't tell me the sad news until we got to the savoury.

Darrell (*continuing as though she hadn't spoken*). And all the time that you were sitting there sniffling—and quivering your chin at me—and making me feel like a *brute*—all that time you were thinking of Hilary.

Nora. How could I help thinking of Hilary when you sat there thinking of Hilary's wife?

Darrell. Well, I hope he doesn't make *you* as unhappy as he has *Eloise*, that's all.

Nora. If he does I'll follow Eloise's example and elope with you!

Darrell (*disgustedly*). Oh!

(*He moves away to* R. *a little.*)

Nora. But he won't make me unhappy—I understand him too well.

Darrell (*turning to* Nora). He's not the sort of man I'd have chosen for you, Nora.

Nora. Yes, I know the sort of man you'd have chosen for me

—something old and rickety with long white whiskers—(*she indicates a beard to the waist line*)—and a weak heart.

DARRELL. Oh, well—I suppose you know what you want.

NORA. Yes, I may not know much, but I do know what I want. I'm not like you, Darry.

DARRELL. We all make mistakes and perhaps I've made more than my share.

NORA. I'm sure you have, dear.

DARRELL. If I have it's because I've never had anyone to keep me straight.

NORA. Oh, tuh! tuh! tuh! (*Going close to* DARRELL.) You have lacked feminine influence, haven't you, dear?

(*She chucks him under the chin.*)

DARRELL (*in disgust at her kidding*). Oh! (*Starts up* R.C.)

NORA (*turning to look after him*). Where are you going?

DARRELL (*up* C. *at the doors*). I'm going to get out of this damn place right away!

(*He exits* C. *and off to* R.)

ELOISE (*entering from room* C. *on balcony fully dressed and wearing her hat and coat. She carries her gloves*). Where's Darry going?

NORA. He's going to get out of this damn place right away. (*Goes to the* L. *end of the couch* R.)

ELOISE (*coming down the* L. *stairway*). Oh, he's told you we're leaving, has he?

NORA. He told me he was leaving.

ELOISE. And you'll be pleased to know that I am leaving with him. (*Comes down* L. *of table to front of table.*)

NORA (*moves to* ELOISE). My dear, you're making a great mistake. Darry is a luxury—like champagne—a little now and then is delightfully stimulating, at times, almost intoxicating—but as a steady diet—not at all.

ELOISE. Dear me—that sounds like envy.

NORA. Perhaps it is—but then you see I've been intoxicated before—and you're not used to it.

ELOISE. Oh, I know he proved fickle to you—but it's different with me.

NORA. Is it? How?

ELOISE. Well, there's always one real love in every man's life, isn't there?

NORA *and* ELOISE (*together*). "And my love for you is that love in mine."

ELOISE (*aghast*). He told *you* that, *too*?

NORA. My dear, it's one of his stock phrases. He says it to every woman he meets.

ELOISE. I don't believe it! You're just trying to stop me from going, but you can't because I've made up my mind.

(*She turns away* L.)

HILARY (*enters from pantry* R. *with four cocktails on a tray*). Here we are! Did you think I was never coming? (*Coming down* R. *of* NORA.)

NORA. I was beginning to think the smell of gin had gone to your head. (*Looks at* HILARY *and laughs as she takes cocktail from tray.*) But why four of them?

(*She goes to front of couch* R. *as she speaks.*)

HILARY (*placing tray on the table*). Just a parting toast to the happy couple we are leaving behind.

NORA (R.C.). It's *we* who are being left behind, it seems.

HILARY (R.C.). What? (*He turns and looks at* ELOISE *in surprise.*) Oh—don't tell me you've put on that eloping gown again.

(NORA *sits on* R. *arm of couch.*)

ELOISE (L. *of the table—defiantly*). I'm leaving you for the *last time*. Darry and I are going just as soon as the cab comes.

HILARY (C.). But, my dear, that's impossible. There's somebody coming out in that cab especially to see you.

ELOISE. Yes, I know—your lawyer.

HILARY. My lawyer?

ELOISE. Oh, you thought you were being very clever, didn't you?—but we found out all about it—and if there are any legal arrangements to be made, he can help you make them with Mrs. Gail!

NORA (R. *on* R. *arm of couch*). That's very sweet and generous of you, dear.

ELOISE. Not at all.

(HILARY *moves to* R. *to clear for* DARRELL.)

DARRELL (*entering quickly* C. *from off* R., *followed by* CARTER. *Speaking as he enters*). Are you ready, Eloise? The cab's here and—— (*Stops on seeing* HILARY, *who has turned* R. *to* NORA.)

ELOISE. I'm quite ready.

DARRELL (*to* CARTER). Get that trunk on the cab now.

(CARTER *goes upstairs into* C. *room.*)

HILARY. I hear you're leaving us, McKnight.

DARRELL (*coming down* R. *of table*). Who told you?

ELOISE (C.L.). I told them . . . you needn't be afraid, Darry.

DARRELL. Afraid? (*Defiantly.*) I'd like to see him stop us. That's all.

HILARY. I don't know that I want to stop you. After all, I'm not sure that it isn't the best possible solution to a very difficult problem, so we'll turn the cocktails into a stirrup cup and drink

God-speed to the parting guests. (*Takes tray from the table, and offers cocktail to* ELOISE.) Eloise!

ELOISE (*refusing cocktail*). No, thank you.

HILARY (*turns to* NORA, *who is at* L. *end of couch and offers her one*). Nora!

NORA (*taking a glass*). Yes, I will.

HILARY (*offering a drink to* DARRELL). McKnight?

DARRELL (*taking a glass*). Rather!

HILARY. I felt you wouldn't fail me! (*Raising his glass.*) Good luck—good health and all true happiness!

(BISHOP KENNELLY *starts on.*)

NORA (*raising her glass*). Hear! Hear!!!! (*Drinks and places glass on mantel.*)

BISHOP (*up* C., *removing hat*). Well!

(*All turn and look at him in astonishment.*)

ELOISE (*as she turns and sees him*). Uncle! (*Goes up* L. *of table to* BISHOP.)

HILARY (*putting glass down on "kidney" table*). Bishop Kennelly!

ELOISE. Uncle!

(DARRELL *puts glass down on table and moves to* L. *as* ELOISE *goes up to* BISHOP. BISHOP *takes* ELOISE *in his arms and kisses her on both cheeks.*)

(*Enter* CARTER *with trunk from room* C. *on the balcony. As the* BISHOP *releases her* ELOISE *takes his hat and places it on the desk up* L.C.)

HILARY (*front* L. *end couch*). Well, well, this *is* a surprise!

BISHOP (*coming down with* ELOISE *on his* L.). How are you, Hilary, my boy?

(*As they come down stage* DARRELL *moves up from down* L. *and across the back to down* R. *of* NORA.)

ELOISE. Uncle, however did you know where to find us?

BISHOP. I stopped at the house in town—learned you were out here—and followed you.

ELOISE. Why didn't you let us know you were coming?

BISHOP. I was just childish enough to want to surprise you.

HILARY. You certainly have surprised us!

ELOISE (*hugging him again. He kisses her on the cheek*). You don't know how glad I am to see you, uncle dear!

BISHOP. That repays me a little at any rate—(*noticing that she is dressed for travelling*)—but what's all this—what's all this? You're not leaving here, are you?

ELOISE. Oh, no. We're not leaving—that is——

HILARY. One of our guests is leaving—Mr. McKnight. (*Introducing him.*) Bishop Kennelly.

(HILARY *goes up and moving above the table comes down* L. *of table.* DARRELL *goes to meet the* BISHOP.)

BISHOP (*shaking hands with* DARRELL). Always glad to meet any friend of Hilary's. How do you do, Mr. McKnight?

DARRELL. Did you run out of petrol, too?

BISHOP (*puzzled*). Petrol?

NORA (*crosses* DARRELL *to the* BISHOP. DARRELL *moves to* R.). And I'm Nora Gail—also a friend of the family.

BISHOP (*cordially taking her hand*). Delighted, I'm sure.

HILARY. I beg your pardon, Nora—I thought you knew the Bishop.

NORA. I *ought* to know him. I've *heard* of him often enough.

ELOISE. Take off your coat, uncle—(*she steps to him and helps him off with his coat*)—and we'll get you something to drink. You must be cold after your long ride.

(*She places his coat on the couch, and moving back of him, comes down on his* R.)

BISHOP. But I see you're dressed for going out——?

ELOISE. I was only going to drive over to the station with Mr. McKnight.

BISHOP. What? Desert your old uncle before he's had a chance to see you?

ELOISE. Well—you see I promised Darry——

BISHOP. Nonsense. I'm sure Mr. McKnight won't mind—will you, sir?

DARRELL. Well——

BISHOP. Of course you won't.

DARRELL. Perhaps it's just as well for you to know the truth——

ELOISE (*breaking in quickly*). Perhaps Mrs. Gail would like to drive you over.

NORA. No, thanks—I've no desire to act as camouflage.

BISHOP. Well, I can't let my little girl go now. (*Puts his arm about her and starts her over* L., *passing her across him to* C., *where she stops as* CARTER *speaks.*)

CARTER (C. *on balcony with the trunk*). About the trunk, ma'am?

ELOISE (*turns her back to the audience and looks up at* CARTER, *who has been up on the balcony with the trunk ever since the* BISHOP'S *entrance waiting for orders. At loss to know what to say, turns to her* R. *and looks at the* BISHOP. *Blankly*). Oh, yes—the trunk. (*Glances appealingly at* HILARY.)

HILARY (*coming to her rescue*). You'd better take it back again, Carter.

CARTER. Yes, sir.

(*He drags the trunk back into room* C. *on balcony and after a short pause he re-enters and closing the door, comes down the* R. *stairway and exits into the pantry* R.)

Hilary (*continuing to* Darrell). Perhaps Mr. McKnight will stay a little longer now that the Bishop has come.

Nora. Yes, *do* stay, Darry.

Darrell (*to* Nora). I'll have to—I've got some of my things in her trunk.

Nora. Good! Then we'll all stay.

(Darrell *is disgusted. He throws his hat and coat down on the couch.*)

Bishop. Splendid! (Darrell *moves up to* R. *of* C. *door.*) Then I shan't be breaking up the party. (*Looks at his hands.*) And now I wonder if I might have a wash.

Hilary. Certainly.

Bishop (*to* Eloise). Have you a room for me?

Eloise. Of course we have, you dear old thing. That one in there. (*She indicates the room* L.1.) I'll see that it's in order.

(*She takes a step or two to* L. *so that she is directly in front of the table.* Hilary's *line stops her.*)

Hilary (*stepping toward the door*). Let me attend to it.

Bishop (*he crosses* Eloise *to* Hilary). No, no—you mustn't neglect your guests on my account.

Nora (*as the* Bishop *goes to* Hilary *she moves up* C. *to the* L. *of* Darrell). Oh, don't bother about me and Darry. We'll take each other off your hands. Besides, you must have a lot to talk about. (*She takes* Darrell *by the arm.*) Come along, Darry, let's go into the garden.

(Darrell *reluctantly allows himself to be led out* C. *and off to* L.)

Bishop (*as soon as they are well off*). Well, well, it seems years since I've seen you children.

Eloise. It's only three months, uncle.

Bishop. I wanted to see how everything was in the dove-cot. (*He takes them both in with a glance.*) Are we as happy as ever?

Eloise (*at* R. *of the table* C.) Don't we seem happy?

Hilary (L.). Oh, yes, we're very happy.

Bishop (L., *between* Eloise *and* Hilary). That's right. Remember I'm responsible for you both. (*To* Eloise.) It was I who gave you to Hilary, when even your own parents disapproved. It was I who married you. I'm glad you are happy. You ought to be, for if ever two of God's creatures were made for each other—you are the two.

(Eloise *turns her face away to* R., *ashamed.* Bishop *turns and winks at* Hilary, *then glances at* Eloise.)

Well, I'll only be a moment.

(*He exits into the room* L.1.)

Eloise (*she takes off her coat and hat as she moves to the front of the couch,* R. *As she goes*). This is *awful*, isn't it? What are we going to do? (*Places her hat and coat on the couch* R.)

Hilary (*moving toward* Eloise *to a little* R. *of* C.). Poor old fellow—it will just break his heart, but I suppose he ought to be told.

Eloise (R.C.). He mustn't know, Hilary. We mustn't let him know.

Hilary. But he's sure to notice the absence of affection between us.

Eloise (*taking a step toward* Hilary). Can't we—pretend—to be affectionate?

Hilary. Pretend?

Eloise. Just when he's about, I mean. (*Moving close to* Hilary.) He loves us both and it will just break his heart if he finds out we're unhappy.

(*She plays with the lapels of* Hilary's *coat.*)

Hilary. But we're not unhappy, are we?

Eloise. You know what I mean. It will be much kinder to let him go on thinking we—we love each other.

Hilary. But would that be honest? To pretend an affection we don't feel!

Eloise (*stepping away from him and speaking sharply in jealous anger*). I think it's the least you can do for me—after the way you've been carrying on with that woman.

Hilary. The way *I've* been carrying on?

Eloise (C.R.). Oh, it's none of my business now, but I do think you might have played fair with me instead of pretending to be so magnanimous and forgiving—when all the time you wanted a divorce as much as I did.

Hilary (C.L.). I wanted it?

Eloise (*coaxingly*). And now, when I want you to do the littlest thing—just for uncle—you won't even pretend. (*She turns away from him; bursting into tears.*) I'm sure I'd do it for you.

(*She sobs aloud.*)

Hilary. There, there, my dear—I'll do anything to make you happy—even to pretending that I love you.

(*He goes to her and tenderly placing his arms about her, he turns her to him.*)

(Eloise *gives a little joyous sob and cuddles into his arms.*)

Darrell (*he enters* C. *from* L. *just in time to get the picture and stops with a gasp of surprise*). Well!!

Eloise (*breaking away to* R.). Oh! Darry!

Hilary (*pleasantly*). Hello, McKnight.

DARRELL (*coming down* R. *of table—sarcastically*). Oh, don't let me disturb you. Get on with it.

HILARY. What's the matter? You seem a trifle peeved.

DARRELL. Well, I've a right to be peeved, haven't I? The way you two have been putting it over on me.

HILARY. What do you mean?

ELOISE (R.C.). I'll tell you what he means. He's tired of me and wants to be free. I realized it when he began to quarrel with me the very first thing in the morning. But I didn't want to give *that woman* the satisfaction of knowing it—so I kept quiet. He's dissatisfied with his bargain and so am I and for all I care now—(*she goes to* DARRELL)—he can go straight to the devil!

HILARY. Eloise!!

ELOISE (*she turns to* HILARY). Oh, I know the position I'm placing myself in. I've lost my husband, my reputation and everything I had—and now I've lost my faith in the only other man I ever cared for. It's what usually happens to a woman who trusts a man, but I don't care so long as I'm rid of him—rid of both of you! (*She crosses to the stairway up* L. *and goes quickly up the stairs; speaking the rest of her line as she goes.*) I'm going upstairs to put my things together and go to some place where I'll never see or hear of either of you again!

HILARY (C.R., *his back to audience looking up at her*). Ah, but where?

(DARRELL *down* L. *with back to audience, looking up at* ELOISE.)

ELOISE (*at door of room up* C. *on balcony*). I don't know—but there must be some place for women who are sick to death of men, and I am absolutely.

(*She exits quickly into* C. *room, banging the door.*)

HILARY (*reproachfully shaking his head as he and* DARRELL *face each other*). McKnight, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

DARRELL. Oh, is that so?

ELOISE (*suddenly throws open the door up* C. *on balcony and throws* DARRELL'S *clothing over the balcony railing to the floor below between* DARRELL *and* HILARY). *These are yours*, I believe! (*Dashes back into the room and bangs the door.*)

DARRELL (*a pause while* DARRELL *looks indignantly up at the room up* C., *then looking sadly at his clothing, he begins to gather up the various garments; shaking the dust from them as he drapes them over his arm.* HILARY *laughs merrily at his predicament*). Where's my——? (*As he gathers up the last of his clothing.*) Isn't that just like a woman?

(*He glances at the door up* C. *on balcony.*)

HILARY. This domestic life is hell, old man. (*A pause.* HILARY *shakes his head reproachfully.*) McKnight, I think you've behaved *very badly.*

DARRELL. Oh, do you?

HILARY. I do indeed. Deliberately winning a woman's heart and then casting it aside like an old shoe or soiled glove!

DARRELL. Don't you try any of that old story-book stuff on me. And you needn't pin any medals on yourself either.

HILARY. What do you mean?

DARRELL (L.C.). What do you suppose Nora'll say when I tell her how I found you here with your wife in your arms.

HILARY (*a step toward* DARRELL, *his arms outstretched in mock pleading*). McKnight, you wouldn't tell her that?

DARRELL (*firmly*). It's my duty to tell her. I'm not going to let her break her heart over a man like you!

HILARY. But, McKnight——

DARRELL (*going up* C. *and shaking his finger at* HILARY *who is on his* R. *and just below him.*) Perhaps you'll stop crowing over me after this.

(*He exits* C. *and off to* L., *carrying his clothing with him.*)

(HILARY *takes a step after him and then bursts into peals of merry laughter.*)

BISHOP (*enters* L.1. *and comes to* L.C.). Where is Eloise?

HILARY (*up* R.C.). Upstairs.

(*He indicates the room* C. *on the balcony.*)

BISHOP. Well? How is it working out?

HILARY (*coming down* R.). Fine—but you came just in time.

BISHOP. I took the first train I could get out after—— (*He glances at the room up* C. *and lowers his voice.*) I received your telegram. You really think she meant to do it?

HILARY. I think there's very little doubt about it.

BISHOP (*sighs*). Poor child. Poor child. She's so young. You mustn't blame her too severely.

HILARY. I don't blame her, uncle. I blame myself the more of the two. No, I don't blame her.

BISHOP. I'm glad of that. I'd feel very sorry if I thought it was going to make any difference between you.

HILARY. It will make a difference. I never realized before how much she meant to me.

BISHOP. That's right. (*Suddenly.*) Didn't some one suggest giving me something to warm me after my trip?

HILARY. I beg your pardon, uncle, I'll get it at once.

(*He starts toward the pantry* R.)

BISHOP (*following him*). Is it in there?

HILARY. Yes, but you needn't come for it——

(*Seeing that the* BISHOP *is following him, he exits into the pantry* R.)

Bishop (*as he follows* Hilary *into the pantry* R.). Bless your heart, I don't mind coming for it. I've been in—(*he exits into the pantry* R.)—the pantry before.

Nora (*speaks as though continuing a conversation as she enters* C. *from* L. *and comes down* R.C. Darrell *follows at her heels; still carrying his clothing. She waves* Darrell *away*). No! No! No! I know you too well, Darry, to pay any attention to your rapid changes of heart.

(*She moves to the front of the couch* R.)

Darrell (*coming down to her*). But, Nora, *this* time——

Nora (R. *front of the couch*). This time is just like every other time.

Darrell. I love *you*, Nora.

Nora (*derisively*). Ha!

Darrell (*going impulsively toward her*). I really do. You know there is always one real love in every man's life and my love for you is that love in mine.

Nora (*laughs; then reprovingly*). Oh, Darry, I don't believe you even remember having said that to me before—and you sing the same song to any woman who will listen.

(*She turns from him and sits on the couch.*)

Darrell. Well—it's my damned susceptible nature—a pretty woman draws me to her in spite of myself.

Nora. Huh?

Darrell (*throwing his clothing on the* L. *end of the couch and sitting beside her*). But not the way you do! There's something about you that fills me with content. It's like—coming home to a feeling of sweet security and peace.

(*He takes her* L. *hand and presses it to his* L. *cheek.*)

Nora (*with a deep sigh*). Oh, Darry, if I could only believe that you never said *that* to any other woman.

Darrell. Upon my honour, Nora, I've never said *that* to anyone.

Nora. Darrell?

Darrell. How could I? I just thought of it this minute.

Nora (*giving in, with a deep sigh. They embrace*). I know I'm a fool.

Darrell. No. You're *not* a fool.

Nora. Yes, I am—a fool—but I can't help it. (*She releases* Darrell *from her embrace and looks at him critically.*) It's the mother instinct in me you appeal to. (*She puts her arm around* Darrell. *He pillows his head on her shoulder.*) I know miracles don't happen and you're going to be the same old rascal to the end of your days——

Darrell (*breaking away. Reproachfully*). Nora!!

Nora. Yes, dear, I know it. I know it. But I'm resigned to it.

(*She throws her arm around* Darrell *and they are locked in a fond embrace as* Hilary *enters from the pantry* R.)

Hilary (*up* R. *above the couch*). Well, I never!!

(Eloise *comes out of her room and downstairs.*)

(Darrell *and* Nora *break their embrace and rise quickly.* Darrell *goes* R. *of* Nora.)

(Hilary *comes down* R.C.)

Nora (*taking* Darrell's *arm. To* Hilary). I've decided to take him in hand and save a great many women from making mistakes.

Hilary (*to* Eloise). My dear, prepare yourself for a great shock. McKnight has changed his mind.

Eloise (*indifferently*). Oh, indeed!

Darrell (*over* R.). I'm sorry—but you did tell me to go to the devil—Eloise.

Nora (*at* R. *front of couch*). So he came straight to me, and we're going to be married immediately.

(*They start to go out.*)

Darrell (*stops at* L. *end of couch*). Wait a minute.

Nora (*stops*). What's the matter?

Darrell. My clothes. (*Takes up the clothes.*)

Nora. What are you going to do with those?

Darrell. Have you got room for these in your trunk?

Nora (*laughing*). Oh, go along with you.

(Darrell *goes out* C. *and off* L.)

Hilary. Nora! Nora!

(Nora *turns to him. He goes to her and they shake hands over the success of their plans.*)

(Nora *then exits* C.)

(Eloise *crosses to the couch* R. *as* Hilary *goes up to* Nora. *She takes her hat and coat from* L. *end of couch, and crosses slowly back towards door* L.)

(*Coming down* C.) Where are you going?

Eloise (*front of table* L.). I don't know.

Hilary (*crosses to* Eloise, *and takes her hat and coat from her*). I do—you're going to stay here. (*Goes to couch and puts hat and coat on* L. *end of it.*)

Eloise. I've made a terrible mistake, Hilary.

Hilary (c.). Well, we all make mistakes.

Eloise. Yes, but not fatal ones. I've made an irretrievable blunder.

Hilary. I don't think so. After all, the Bishop still believes in you.

Eloise. Yes, but only because I've deceived him.

Hilary. Well, I've deceived him too. It's a great thing to have a Bishop for an uncle—a great safeguard.

Eloise. If he thought I'd ever cared for Darry——

Hilary. Of course he'd be terribly distressed, but I don't suppose he'd believe it even if you told him yourself . . . any more than I should.

Eloise. What did you say?

Hilary. I said, any more than I should.

Eloise. Don't you believe I ever cared for Darry?

Hilary. No, I think you thought you did. But I knew all the time you only really cared for me.

Eloise. What extraordinary conceit.

Hilary. Quite so, dear, that's just what pulled me through.

Eloise. What do you mean?

Hilary (*crosses to table* L. *and sits on* R. *end of it*). You blessed creature, do you suppose I should have taken all this trouble about you, if I hadn't been absolutely devoted to you?

Eloise. But you said at the time when you let me go away you were thinking only of my happiness. Why did you let me go?

Hilary. To get you back again, back again to ask you to forgive me.

Eloise. To forgive *you*?

Hilary. Yes—because I felt I was far more to blame than you were.

Eloise. I don't in the least think so, but oh, Hilary, it's perfectly sweet of you to say it, even if you don't mean it.

(*She sits on edge of table* L. *of* Hilary.)

Hilary. But I do mean it—but I should have said it all the same if I hadn't meant it.

Eloise. What?

Hilary. Certainly. The Bishop is still here. (*The* Bishop *enters.*) Only a quarter of an hour ago you begged me to pretend to love you, just to make the old boy happy, and I agreed to do so if it would make you happy. Isn't that so?

Eloise. Yes, but——

Hilary. Look out—here he is. Pretend! Pretend for all you're worth.

(Hilary *sings "Mary Green"—crosses* R., *looks at* Bishop *and comes back* C. *to* Eloise.)

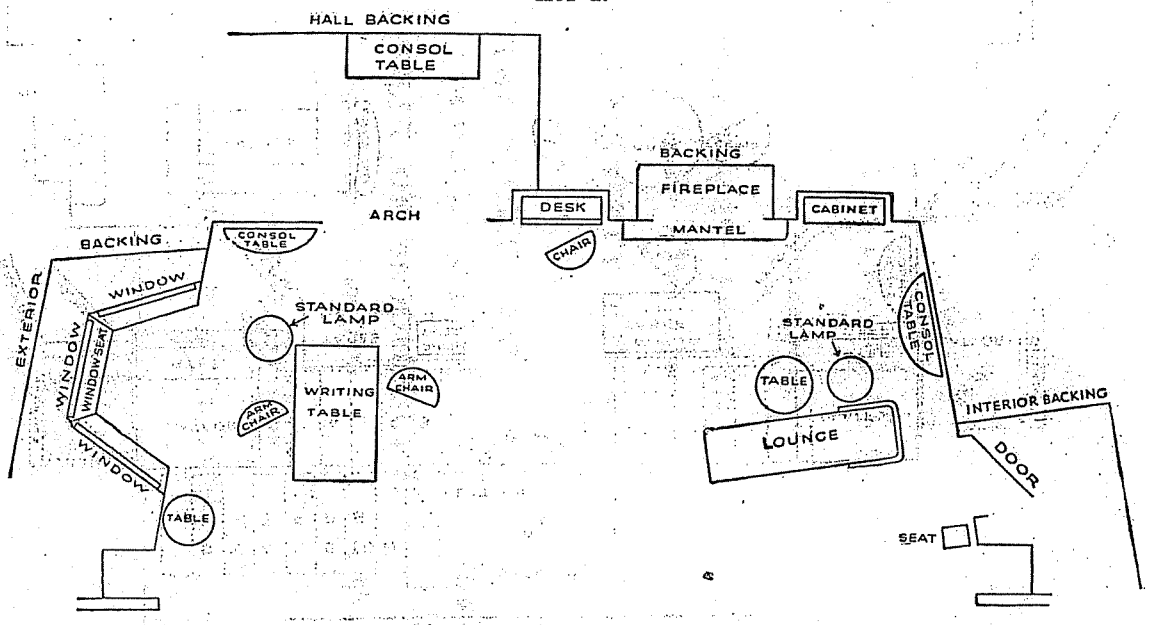
Eloise (*interrupting*). Hilary, I'm not pretending! Hilary, I'm not pretending.

(*They embrace.*)

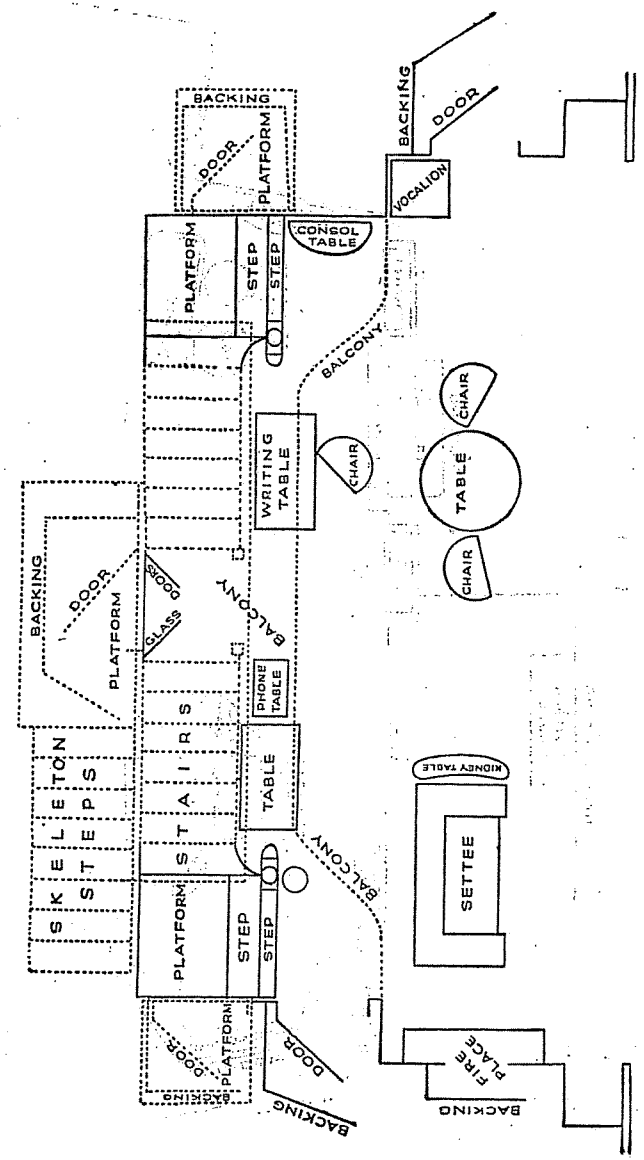
Curtain.

Average time of Act—25 *minutes.*

Act I.


HALL BACKING
CONSOL TABLE
BACKING
FIREPLACE
MANTEL
DESK
CHAIR
CABINET
ARCH
BACKING
CONSOL TABLE
WINDOW
EXTERIOR
WINDOW
WINDOW SEAT
WINDOW
STANDARD LAMP
WRITING TABLE
ARM CHAIR
ARM CHAIR
TABLE
STANDARD LAMP
TABLE
LOUNGE
CONSOL TABLE
INTERIOR BACKING
DOOR
SEAT

ACTS II AND III.
SUN PORCH BACKING



PLAYS BY

IAN HAY

THE HAPPY ENDING.
A Comedy in Three Acts. 2/6

THE SAFETY MATCH.
A Drama in Four Acts. 3/–

THE SPORT OF KINGS.
A Comedy in Three Acts. 2/6

TILLY OF BLOOMSBURY.
A Comedy in Three Acts. 2/6

SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.

AREN'T WE ALL?

A Comedy in Three Acts

By FREDERICK LONSDALE

Characters in the order of their appearance as played at the Globe Theatre:—

MORTON	*E. Vivian Reynolds.*
HON. WILLIE TATHAM	*Herbert Marshall.*
LADY FRINTON	*Ellis Jeffreys.*
ARTHUR WELLS	*Charles Hickman.*
MARTIN STEELE	*Patrick Gover.*
KITTY LAKE	*Cyllene Moxon.*
LORD GRENHAM	*Julian Royce.*
HON. MRS. W. TATHAM	*Marie Löhr.*
ROBERTS	*E. A. Walker.*
ANGELA LYNTON	*Elizabeth Chesney.*
REVEREND ERNEST LYNTON	*Eric Lewis.*
JOHN WILLOCKS	*Martin Lewis.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

ACT I. —*Room in* WILLIE TATHAM'S *House in Mayfair.*
ACT II. —*Room at Grenham Court.*
ACT III.—*The same as* ACT II.

■ ■ ■ ■

The play is published at 2s. 6d. net. The fee for one performance by amateurs is £5 5s.

■ ■ ■ ■

SAMUEL FRENCH LTD.